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ETHNOGRAPHICAL MUSEUM OF SWEDEN, STOCKHOLM
(ETNOGRAFISKA MUSEET)

Monograph Series · Publication No. 11

THE NIOMBO CULT AMONG THE BABWENDE

by
Ragnar Widman

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***Funds for printing this paper have been provided
by the Swedish Humanistic Research Council.***

PREFACE

During my years as a missionary of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden in the Congo I had many opportunities to study the manners and customs and religious conceptions of the Congolese. The daily contact with older persons made it possible to catch a glimpse of their earlier cult practices that now have disappeared altogether or in part. There is no doubt that the *niombo cult* belongs to the more arresting ones among the Babwende in the République Démocratique du Congo. The material I succeeded to collect concerning this cult, is reported on in this paper. It was presented at a seminar in general and comparative ethnography at the University of Stockholm on 7 May, 1965.

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the professor of ethnography at the University of Stockholm, Sigvald Linné, without whose support this paper would not have been published. My thanks go also to the curator at the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Bertil Söderberg, for his assistance and the interest he has shown. And I am indebted to the British-educated engineer and retired overseas mines executive, Anders Svedéus, for his English translation of the paper.

Ragnar Widman

Stockholm, Sweden
October, 1967



Replica of niombo at Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm

INTRODUCTION

1. *Geographical Position*

The Babwende make up one of the largest tribes populating the Lower Congo. They inhabit quite an extensive area to the north of the Congo river and mainly between two of its tributaries, the Luala and the Kenke river, although they are also found to the west of the upper Luala. To the west of the Babwende live the Basundi, to the north and east the Baladi and the Bateke and to the south the people of Mazinga (they are Bakongo). The region inhabited by the Babwende is very undulated and hilly and is traversed by the Cristal Mountain range, which runs parallel to the Atlantic seaboard. Several large valleys cut through the country and the Luala valley is the most important of these¹).

2. *People*

The Babwende belong to the Congo group of the western Central-Bantu and their territory, together with that of the Basundi, the Badondo, the Bakamba, and eventually the Babembe, at one time formed a province in the old Kingdom of the Congo. This province was called Nsundi²). When Ntinu Wene, also called Ne Lukeni lua Nzinga, at about the end of the 13th century founded the Kingdom of the Congo, he made Nsundi the principal province of the realm and it was considered royal hereditary estate.

For this reason, the first-born son of the king, or the one who had been chosen to succeed him as regent, was always placed as leader or governor of the Nsundi province³). J. de Munck, R. P., mentions the Babwende as a separate people already at the time the Kingdom of the Congo was founded. From a "Mbanza Congo" (town of the Congo), which he thinks existed long before San Salvador that is also called Mbanza Congo, but which it has not yet been possible to locate, different tribes spread out and formed, among others, the Kingdoms of the Ne Mazinga, the Ne Bwende, the Loango, and the Vungu. King Ntinu Wene, also called Ne Lukeni lua Nzinga, descended from the Vungu and formed the Kingdom of the Congo and located his capital in Mbanza Congo dia Ntotila, the present San Salvador⁴). Later he conquered Bwende that thus together with Sundi, Bembe, Dondo, and Kamba came to make up the Nsundi province. If this be correct, the Babwende have traditions that reach far back in time. Even H. Baumann speaks of the Babwende and classes them among the Bas-Congo group⁵).





Gunnar F. Jasson 1954

In the work *Tre år i Kongo* there is the following information about the Babwende: "In Manyanga one comes across a more industrious and hard-working population; it is the Ba-boende people, which inhabit an area stretched out from here and up to the Stanley Pool. This last-mentioned tribe are undeniably superior both intellectually and physically to the people living nearer the coast. The willingness of the Ba-boende people to serve as workers at the stations speaks much in their favour compared with the lazy, degenerated natives below Lukunga. The tribe that inhabit the north bank of the Congo from M'boma and up to Manyanga are called Ba-Sundi and likewise belong to the big Ba-Congo group"⁶).

Missionary J. Hammar has perhaps given the Babwende a less satisfactory testimonial. He writes in an essay about the Babwende: "The Babwende are never afraid to run into debt but rather try to obtain as much as possible on credit leaving it for their descendents to make repayment. A mighty and insolent man robs the possessions of others and becomes over head and ears in debt but nobody dares to tackle him. When one day he dies and his heirs don't have the power that he had, his creditors come and claim their share and more. No interest on or compensation for the loan is paid, on the contrary the debt remains the same no matter how old it is, and time the natives have aplenty"⁷). But Hammar concedes that owing to their fine stature and strength they show commendable vigour and stamina when it is a question of carrying loads over great distances⁸). Porter caravans, to be sure, were the only means of haulage to the interior of the Congo in the past.

Even apart from the contacts with government officials and traders the Babwende quite early on made acquaintance with European culture and civilization through Catholic as well as Protestant missionaries. The very first ones to come through Bwende on their way to the Stanley Pool were English Protestant missionaries. It was in 1881 and their intention was to establish a mission-station on the Stanley Pool. But it is primarily the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden that has worked among the Babwende. A certain influence—although more indirect—came to be exerted upon the Babwende by the Diadia mission-station built in 1888 on the Bwende border, by the Nganda station established in 1890, and by the Kinkenge station established in 1897 to the west of the Luala valley. This influence attained a direct expression when the Kingoyi mission-station was established in 1900 amidst the Babwende on the border of the former French Congo⁹.)

In some respects the Babwende have succeeded in retaining some of their individuality from of old. This, for one thing, is manifested in the dialect they speak, which partly diverges from that of other tribes in the Lower Congo. Dr. K. E. Laman writes thereof in his text-book of the Congo language: "Phonetically one can distinguish between three major dialects in the Congo language: the San Salvador, the Mazinga, and the Bwende dialect. The Bwende

dialect is mainly spoken within Bwende proper that is situated on both sides of the border between the Belgian and the French Congo (within the field of action of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden). The principal deviations from the Mazinga dialect are given in the text-book (see Nos. 34—36 on euphony and different classes of nouns). In respect to construction and vocabulary the language in the French Congo resembles partly the Bwende dialect and partly the Mazinga dialect and therefore our literature can be used to advantage in the French Congo"¹⁰).

The Babwende are of great interest to the scholar owing to the peculiar burial cult that has been developed among them and that usually is called *niombo burial*. Our knowledge of this extraordinary form of burial can be said to derive from several sources.

a) Niombo burials have been described in essays and articles by ethnographers and by missionaries who have worked in the Babwende region during a succession of years and have been thoroughly familiar with the manners and customs of the Babwende and their religious conceptions. Here may be mentioned men such as the curator of the Nordic Museum, Ernst Manker (sometimes his name is written as Manke), Missionaries K. E. Laman, D.D., J. Hammar, A. Walder, Edward Karlman, Josef Öhrneman, and others.

b) A number of *calabashes* from the Babwende has been brought home by Missionaries S. A. Flodén, W. Walldén, C. W. Grahn, J. Hammar, and others, and are in the keeping of the Gothenburg Ethnographical Museum and the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden in Stockholm. These calabashes "have a vivid and narrative ornamentation engraved on them" where the niombo motif often is found. Some ten of these calabashes have been described in detail by Manker¹¹). The calabash engravings are of great interest to research not least because here the Congolese themselves have reproduced their own observations in their drawings. "They thus show the black man's view of things and how he pictorially contrives to reproduce what he sees"¹²). One calabash, No X, numbered 16—14—123 in the catalogue of the Gothenburg Ethnographical Museum, is even signed by a man named Yozefim, presumably a former pupil at the mission-school where he learnt to write, among other things¹³).

c) A fair number of photographs from niombo burials are also preserved. They were taken by missionaries who had occasion to be present personally at these peculiar burials.

d) Verbal descriptions by persons still alive, who have attended them, are a fourth source of information.

e) Last but not least important as a source of information, may here be mentioned the film that Missionary Josef Öhrneman had the opportunity of making at a village near the Kingoyi mission-station right in the middle of the Bwende region. It was an authentic niombo burial he filmed and not a staged

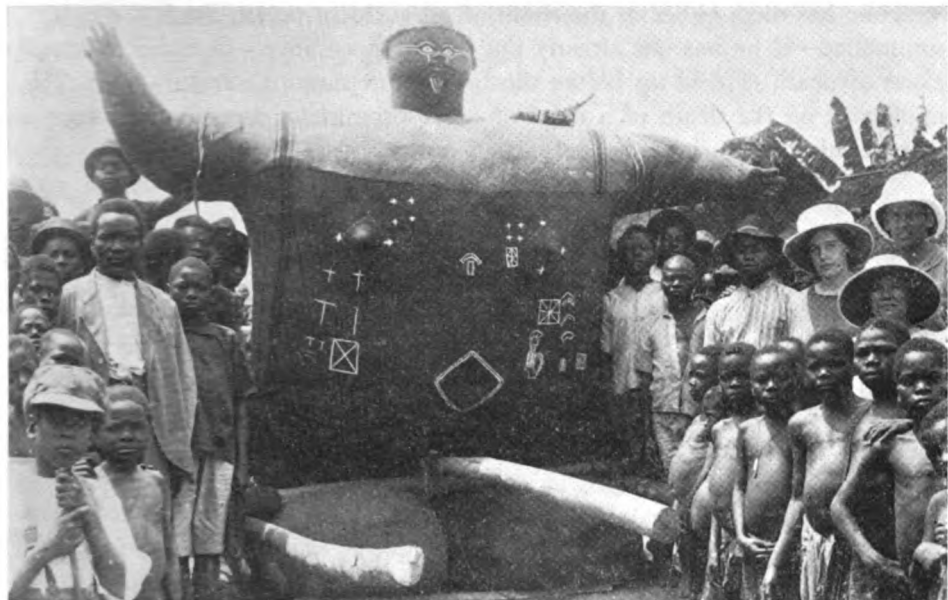
one and, as far as known, the film is the only one of its kind ever made. It is a 35-mm. film, i.e. standard width, owned entirely by the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden that recently has had a duplicate, a so-called fine-grained copy, made of it as the original negative was on the verge of complete deterioration. Manker refers to 1927 as the year of production¹⁴) while Öhrneman himself assigns it to 1926. He writes about it: "Only in July 1926 was the first filming expedition started and the mission-stations at Musana, Sundi Lutete and Kingoyi visited. After a break of two months the journey was continued to the rest of the stations"¹⁵).

3. *Meaning of the Word 'Niombo'*

Laman has translated the word *niombo* (even spelt *nyombo*) by *cadaver*, *corpse*¹⁶). He does not give any derivation of the word but he lets it be understood that *niombo* can be used as a prefix to a person and then indicates that the person in question is dead, e.g. *niombo mfumu*, *feu le chef*, the late chief. Here *niombo* means the same as *widi*, the former, the deceased¹⁷). The usual term for corpse is however *mvumbi*. In his *Svensk-Kikongo Ordbok* (Swedish-Kikongo Dictionary) Laman takes up *mvumbi* as well as *niombo* as terms for corpse in general, but he sets *mvumbi* first here as being the one most used¹⁸). But it is clear that the term *niombo* is used for choice about the so-called *niombo* burials that are characteristic of the Babwende, although even in respect to these the word *mvumbi* would seem to have been used. Missionary C. N. Börrisson describes a *niombo* burial and then says among other things that the corpse "was swathed in an abundance of matting and cloth forming a huge giant ('mvumbi, the highly honoured') with legs and arms and a head"¹⁹). In a Kikongo-Swedish dictionary written by hand, no doubt before the end of the century and in succession copied by the missionaries, the word *mvumbi* is translated by *shrouded corpse*²⁰), which involuntarily carries the thoughts to a *niombo*. Laman has also given the term *mvumbi akitu*, the origin of which he traces from the Bwende region, among other places. This term means great shrouding (burial) of a deceased person, swathed in quantities of grass and matting and sewn up in red woolen blankets. But it can also mean *dried corpse*. Another expression for a dried corpse swathed in a large amount of matting, is *mvumbi amamba*²¹).

4. *Congolese Conceptions of Life and Death*

To understand the reaction of the Congolese to illness and death it is necessary to know their general conception of these things. Illness and death are by no means things that just happen. They are quite certain as to that. Often it is *bandoki* that eat the *nsala*, the soul or the life-force of the sick person, or it is the ancestors who summon him. His body wastes away and



Niombo burial at Kingoyi attended by Missionaries Märta and Karl Aldén and Emma Reinholdson

he dies if *bandoki*, evil-disposed persons, cannot be exposed by the *nganga*, the medicine-man, or the spirits of the dead moved to relent. Sometimes the *ndoki* (zindoki in the plural and *bandoki* as a collective noun) even eats the body itself. This happens for instance when the sick person is afflicted with festering sores²²). Any natural cause for illness and death does not exist. Kaj Birket-Smith writes the following about it: "The numerous mourning customs the living must observe are mostly manifestations of their fear of the deceased or the spirit that has brought about his death"²³). And therefore all effort must be to defend oneself against *bandoki*'s fatal power. Hammar writes: "To protect themselves against being 'eaten', destroyed or bewitched the Babwende wear amulets on their bodies. These consist of *bilongo*, i.e. plants, chalk or other holy or sanctified things that they wear in small bags on a string round the neck or hang on the belt. They even hang such bags, satchels or pea-pods to protect their fruit-trees, plantations, huts, etc., and to hang these round one's property is called 'kandika', immunize against witchcraft"²⁴).

But we all must die some day. This is clear even to the Congolese. And those, who have not been "eaten" by *bandoki*, are finally carried off to the spirit world by their ancestors and the spirits of the dead. That is an obvious fact to them all²⁵). Sometimes the sick person himself is a *ndoki* who does himself harm. It is then for the *nganga* to ferret out whether this is the case²⁸). When

someone has died, either as the result of an accident or an illness the nganga is summoned—if he has not already put in an appearance—in order to have the cause of death cleared up before the funeral preparations are made²⁷). This is applicable on the death of a chief or other prominent man, in particular, and when a niombo burial is to be carried out.

I. PREPARATIONS FOR A NIOMBO BURIAL

1. *People Honoured by a Niombo Burial*

A niombo burial is a lengthy and complicated affair. It was only provided for chiefs or other influential persons at one time. Hammar writes from Nganda on the 24th of October, 1904, and describes the death of a chief at Sundi Mamba, where Hammar had been sent to build a school-house. He says: "The deceased had been a chief and therefore he was to be specially honoured"²⁸). Manker gives an account of a niombo burial and describes its first phase in the following words: "When the head of a family or a chief dies, this is announced by booming riflevolleys and the women gather to cry and wail in the dead man's hut"²⁹). And Laman tells us in his monograph on the Congo that this magnificent form of burial, niombo burial, was "an honoured and rich person's" due³⁰).

2. *Procedure at a Great Man's Death*

When a person had died, in particular a chief or some other influential person, a series of measures had to be taken. These measures, or burial rites, could vary. But the essential things about the preparations were equal³¹). When a venerable person had died, a male or female chief, everybody in the village must observe silence—the usual customs of mourning of course excepted. And the dead person had to remain in his hut. All members of his family should stay on, perhaps between two konzo days (i.e. for the four-day week, previously used in the Congo), and then spend the night in front of the hut. The women should stay in the house of mourning wailing and the men be at the boko-place firing shots and receiving the burial gifts³²). Concerning these gifts see further on. In his monograph, Laman gives an interesting account from the Babwende, precisely about the directions on the death of someone. He writes: "If, up in Bwende, someone has died during the night and the corpse is not immediately wrapped in a shroud, the wife or wives (husband) may be with the deceased as when he (she) was alive. When the corpse is lying on the mat the widow may lie down and encircle it with her arms, as they had been want to lie together. She may also put her mouth to that of the deceased. If the widow is in the sitting position she takes the head of the deceased on her lap. She may not shirk this duty, or her late husband's kanda may punish and insult her, or even drive her out. In addition to this, she will have to make a placatory present"³³).

3. *Making a Death Known*

In an article written at Kingoyi on 14th of May, 1903, Missionary Anders Walder reports how the death of a chief is made known. A chief that Walder and Missionary Per Markus used to visit had died. And Walder says: "Early the next morning we were woken by fierce shooting, and we understood that death had completed its task and that a son of the tropics had ended his life. The shooting continued quite a while and during the day shots were fired off now and then. They were shooting to honour the dead man. As soon as the report of his death had spread to the villages, great crowds of people came to look at the dead man and take part in the mourning. The women came to wail and pray to the deceased person"³⁴).

From Sundi Mamba, Hammar gives the following account: "One night we were woken by dismal cries and gunshots. Soon a whole crowd were joining in the wails that expressed hopeless despair. A man had died. Then a wild and disconsolate song was heard all through the night mingled with loud howls and gunshots. Without a break this went on during the days that followed, above all in the evenings. The deceased man had been a chief and was therefore to be specially honoured"³⁵). Manker gives a similar account from the Bwende region: "When the father of a family or a chief dies, it is announced by crashing rifle-volleys and the women gather to wail and lament in the dead man's hut"³⁶). The same account is given in his article "Niombo, Die Totenbestattung der Babwende"³⁷).

4. *Mummification—Corpse Drying*

The drying of the corpse was the next phase of the burial preparations. This procedure has been described in several essays and articles. Walder informs us that after the people have brought grey blankets and shrouded the corpse and a straw mat had been wrapped on the top of all, "the body was placed in a house and dried over a slow fire, which was kept burning both night and day for some four weeks. In the meantime, his women were sitting by the fire wailing and lamenting, and nothing could make them leave the dead one. The women in the village had to bring them food and their children they also had to take care of. One of the women had a little girl, who would not leave her mother but sat with her day after day in the heat and the smoke. She suffered a great deal from the intolerable heat in the house and from hearing the women's wailing and lamentation. How hopeless their wailing was. They did not know where he (i.e. the dead man, R.W.) had gone"³⁸). In another essay Walder reports that the drying period as a rule lasted for six weeks when large groups of women came from adjacent villages to wail. Night and day the lamentation for the dead chief resounded³⁹). The drying period could vary a great deal and so could the method of proceeding itself. Manker writes: "Then

the corpse is hung over the fire for drying. It is hung in a rope under the roof right over the fire, which is maintained night and day by the mourners, the dead man's wives and the women-folk of the family. The wake and the drying procedure continued week after week, month after month, until the corpse was considered drained of all fluid"⁴⁰). In his essay "Calabash Carvings as Culture Documents", Manker gives the following description of Calabash II: "It is . . . an illustration of the drying process of a corpse before the niombo shrouding. The corpse is hanging under a beam with the back downwards. The hands are lashed round the beam and in addition the body is supported by a rope round the small of the back. On the floor or the ground two mourning women are sitting, striking their foreheads"⁴¹). This reproduction by the artist of what happens in connection with the drying of a corpse is no doubt very realistically rendered. It is an interesting detail that the women in the picture are striking their foreheads, because it is a usual expression of grief. Laman writes in his monograph: "The drying of a corpse is carried out to honour the deceased and to prevent the body from rotting. As a rule, only the corpses of chiefs or, sometimes, spouses are dried. In these cases the period of mourning goes on as long as the corpse is being dried. It is placed to dry in a kind of coffin (kimbi) of palm-ribs with spaces between, which is set up on poles or an elevated platform of palmribs under which a fire may be made. A fire is also lighted on the sides of the platform. The drying proceeds slowly for a period of about a year, during which the widows must tend the fire and submit to still stricter regulations than otherwise. The dripping of fat from the corpse into the fire, the stench and the swarms of blue-bottles that collect make it a terrible trial for the widows to eat and spend their time in the mummification hut. In order to prevent the blue-bottles from laying eggs, a fire is kept up also at the gable-end of the roof, and large clusters of staminate blooms from palms are put on to make a lot of smoke. In addition to this, the widows are armed with twigs with which to drive away the blue-bottles"⁴²). It is easy to understand what a tremendous suffering these drying operations must have caused the poor women. Laman writes about it in another connection: "To dry a corpse, as people say, is something dreadfully nauseating for the widows since they must sit in the same room as the corpse, night and day, to keep the fire under it going and gather up the body fluids in a vessel. They must even eat there and not vomit, for then they had to pay a fine of chickens to the man's relations. They are only allowed to go outside to relieve nature and to empty the fluids from the corpse. Although it is forbidden, they try to smear salt and pepper in their noses so as to be less aware of the stench. The time for preserving and drying a corpse varies a great deal. It may take from 1—2 months to a year, according to the honour to be paid to the dead person. It is a pitiful sight to behold a baby compelled to sit together with its mother in such a house. We saw one on this occasion. It was so utterly thin and limp that its head drooped in all directions when carried

on its mother's back"⁴³). Missionary Edvard Karlman tells us of a niombo burial where the corpse was dried for four months over a continuous fire before it was interred⁴⁴). A description of a corpse-drying procedure is also given by K. J. Pettersson, one of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden's first missionaries in the Congo. The event took place some time towards the end of the 19th century at Lukunga after a violent storm and flood: "Some ruins of houses remained whose owners in some way or other had lost their lives. There were new graves here and there, and a number of bodies were not yet buried. These were still being bewailed. The houses of mourning were usually quite near each other. It was easy to recognize them already at a distance by the smoke that filtered out through their walls and roofs as were they charring-stacks. This smoke derived from the fire maintained beneath the corpses. The fire was kept in such a way that it produced more smoke than heat. The corpse was placed over the fire. It was turned frequently in order to dry more evenly. Round the corpse, the crying women were sitting, not only crying but howling about their great loss"⁴⁵). It should be added that Lukunga is situated within the borderland adjoining Bwende. Even Missionary J. E. Lundahl has furnished a short description of a niombo burial in his book *Tre ungdomsår i Kongo*. He writes among other things: "In one of the villages we visited, the people were getting a corpse ready for burial. When an old person dies it is customary that his body first be dried over a fire. This is the work of the women and they are often busy with that for a couple of months or longer. I have even heard of one who stayed above ground for a year before he was buried"⁴⁶). This description is from Kingoyi. Hammar has also corroborated the custom of drying bodies. From his letter of 24th October, 1904, the following may be quoted: "(The dead chief's body) was dried over a fire, night and day, while the women kept watch by it"⁴⁷). During his visit at Kingoyi in 1926, Missionary J. Öhrneman had an opportunity to make a film of a niombo burial. About the preparations for this he writes: "When a chief or some other rich or eminent man has departed this life, the burial itself is put off quite a long time. To try to put a stop to the decomposition, the corpse is smoke-dried for several months in a separate hut. The women of the dead man must, according to custom, be in there in the smoke and stench to bewail the deceased"⁴⁸). One of the first descriptions of corpse-drying in the Lower Congo is encountered in *Tre år i Kongo*, the work by Möller, Pagels and Gleerup. There it says: "In the Congo especially chiefs and rich men are made much of when they die. The body is suspended from a frame under which a fire is kept up, until all fluids and all fat have disappeared and the body is well-done and quite dry. This gruesome smoking process takes place in the dead man's hut and during the whole time, usually a couple of months, the dead person is surrounded by his wives (if it is the question of a man) and mourning friends. The little hut is thronged with them and those there is no room for inside, are lying all about outside. Meanwhile the women in

particular set up a piercing lamentation. I hardly know of anything more loathsome than such a house of mourning. Think of the black, grinning corpse over the smoking fire and round it the throng of mourners, cruel to watch, their faces smeared with oil and painted black as a sign of sorrow. The stench and the heat, alone, in the house of death is something dreadful"⁴⁹).

5. *Customs and Signs of Mourning*

From the time a person died and as long as the prescribed mourning lasted, a whole series of mourning customs had to be observed. Some of these have been indicated already. These mourning customs affected especially the women, first and foremost the dead man's widows. It has already been mentioned that the women as a sign of sorrow smeared their faces with oil and painted them black⁵⁰). Laman gives a detailed description of this. He writes: "Mourning signs of various kind are used. Almost everywhere ndoba (a black mourning grease or pomade) is applied. In certain tracts of Mayombe and in the French Congo the natives also use chalk, with which the entire body is smeared. Also on the burial mound the wooden figures etc. set out are smeared with chalk. Ndoba is made of burnt peanuts which are pounded up with charcoal and mixed with palm-oil. The hair is plentifully besmeared with this and may not be shaved or cut during the period of mourning. It may be applied to the face and other parts of the body, too, to manifest different degrees of mourning. All adornments are taken off, but rings and ornaments that cannot be removed must be covered with wrappings to prevent their shining.

"Both husband and wife wear such signs of mourning, as do also the nearest of kin. In addition to this, the women must sit round the corpse and weep during the whole period of mourning, while the men may go about their daily work and only give themselves up to sorrow for a week or three or four days. If a husband mourns his wife very deeply he may sit still in his house for a longer period and refrain from remarrying for a long time. As a sign of his sorrow he may then let his hair grow and leave it unkempt for a whole year. Only when it has been shaven off can he consider to remarry, dress well, wash his face and chat and joke with young women"⁵¹). Laman also writes that "as a sign of mourning a woman was to wear a mourning-cloth (mfukila) on her head, and if his wife had died a man did likewise"⁵²).

The women's lamentation did not only express grief for the loss of the departed one—and perhaps not even in the first place—but by this violent show of emotions they wanted to demonstrate their innocence of the man's death. An accusation of that kind could result in persecution with accompanying poisoning⁵³). One of the calabashes described by Manker has a motif that leads one to think of such an accusation. It is the calabash which Manker indicates as No. I, figure 5. He writes: "But what about the woman, sitting there tied with a rope round her neck? Has she perhaps "eaten" the dead one, killed him

with witchcraft? Yes, she stands there accused as a "ndoki". And then only the "nkasa", the poison test, can save her. The poor thing does perhaps rely on her innocence. But nkasa is nothing to trust to, and yet its decision is unquestioned"⁵⁴). K. J. Pettersson has made the following observation regarding the mourning customs: "During the time of mourning these women (i.e. the wives RW) were not allowed to wash themselves, appear in public, or walk on public paths to and from the house of mourning, but had to use roundabout and secret paths. To soften their skin they poured oil on their bodies and bestrewed them with crushed burnt peanuts. The hair, which could not be shaved off during the entire time of mourning, was amply oiled and strewn all over with meal of peanuts. This treatment got the hair matted so that after a time it looked like a bunch of grapes. Through this procedure the women in the end turned black as pitch. Some women got seriously injured by the crying and the smoke, indeed some of them went blind for the rest of their lives"⁵⁵).—Hammar describes some Babwende mourning customs in the following words: "The Babwende show their grief by dressing as poorly as possible, by not washing or bathing, nor shaving off their hair, and by smearing ash, earth or ndoba on their cheeks. They surrender themselves to excessive sorrow and sometimes commit acts of violence, behave like lunatics and burn their houses. They mourn a long time and under lamentation often mention the name of the dead one but sometimes, when asked for it, they avoid it because it would cause them pain to mention it. When some one has distinguished himself by his grief, a feast is arranged and the mourning comes to an end"⁵⁶). Even Manker has described the mourning customs that the women, especially, had to follow. He writes the following: "Die Trauernden setzen die Trauermütze, eine Haube von grobem Bast, auf, hüllen sich in alte, zerlumppte Tücher ein und beschmieren sich das Gesicht mit roter und schwarzer Pomade. Die Frauen brechen dann in ein massloses Wehklagen aus, und die Männer feuern unaufhörlich ihre Flinten ab. Die Trauer ist vielleicht auch gross, aber grösser ist die Furcht vor dem Verdacht, als Ndoki den Verstorbenen 'gegessen' zu haben. Auch befürchtet man, dass sein Geist sich nicht hinreichend geehrt fühlt"⁵⁷).

As long as the corpse stayed in the house, the wailing and the mourning songs continued precisely as on the death-day. It was loud and pierced by cries and screams. When members of the family and even the dead man's friends came, the screams became stronger and louder. Even the men cried occasionally if the dead man had been much loved. But their crying only lasted for a time. As a rule it was the widows and other female relations of the dead man that cried during the time of mourning. The widows and near relatives came to cry in the morning and at night and even at other times. Some came from other villages to cry for a time and then went back home again⁵⁸). The time for the shooting and the mourning songs varied according to the dead man's reputation. "The more lamentation and shooting the better"⁵⁹). Laman

has in his monograph given some examples of the lamentation that could be heard: "‘A great storm, I thought that which remained was the rainbow, a great storm took my kanda (family RW) with it through boasting.’ ‘Sweep clean where our chiefs dance, sweep clean!’ ‘Konko (the grasshopper), yaaya (elder brother), I weep, e Konko yaaya. To Konko one has gone to carve the house at Maza ma Nkenge (the water at Nkenge), I weep, I weep, e Konko yaaya.’ During the lamentations they may also beat drums and gongs in the house where the deceased chief is being honoured”⁶⁰).

6. *Significance of Shotgun Volleys*

Here above the custom of discharging gunshots when someone died has been mentioned. Often large quantities of gunpowder were used up on such occasions. This custom had several purposes. Gunpowder was fired, Laman writes, so as to make known, far and near, that a chief had departed this life or that a person had died in the village from which the shots were heard. If one did not shoot, the relations who lived in other villages would not have learnt about the death as soon and neither been able to get themselves ready to come at once to bewail the dead one and attend the burial. The shooting thus had to take the place of modern communication between the villages. "The shooting with gunpowder was tantamount to a peaceful announcement for other parts"⁶¹). But this shooting also had another purpose. They shot to honour the dead person⁶²). It was for example the custom at the burial that the gunpowder, which was left by the dead man or had been given by his family for the burial, should be used up. Generally, old guns were made use of. The gun-barrels were aimed at the ground and one shot after another was fired⁶³). Hammar also mentions a third motive for the shooting. He writes: "When someone has died, the women assemble to sing mourning songs and the men to shoot. According to the standing of the deceased, the time for the mourning songs and the shooting varies. The more lamentation and shooting the better. They shoot to honour the dead one but also lest he come back"⁶⁴). Here then the protective element against the spirits enters the picture. Even Walder tells us of the shooting to honour the dead person and the firing of shots now and then during the whole day from early in the morning to announce the death of a chief⁶⁵). Möller, Pagels and Glerup write about the shooting and say it could continue for several days. This is one of the reasons for "the enormous consumption of gunpowder among the people. It is not unusual to see long caravans return from the factories, loaded with powder—which mostly is used as described above"⁶⁶).

7. *Obligation of Contributing to Niombo Shrouds*

During the time the drying process went on, the contributions to the niombo shroud for the burial were collected. The pile "of cloth, matting and blankets

grew. That is the *cerements*, the materials for the dead one's *niombo*. It is the sacred duty of every male relative to furnish as much of these materials as he can so that their kinsman's *niombo* may be bigger and mightier than anyone before"⁶⁷). The more *cerements* there were, the more honourable for the dead person and for those left behind. "It is a sacred duty of every male relative to give something to the shrouding and to shoot, and if this is not complied with, he has to be ashamed and runs the risk of getting into trouble with the dead one"⁶⁸). The most detailed description concerning the duty to take part in the *niombo* shrouding is given by Laman. He writes: "If a man died, all the male members of the *kanda* must contribute pieces of cloth for the shroud, some five, others six or ten. They must also collect gunpowder for the salvoes fired at the funeral. Some gave a keg, others five or six jugs, according to their means. Also those who had got a wife from the *kanda* of the deceased must give cloth for the shroud, some a piece of cloth, others a blanket, etc. When everything was collected in the house where the corpse was lying, it had to be looked over, seeing there was enough. All was counted and divided into two heaps. One of these was used for the shroud and the other was to be kept"⁶⁹). To the purpose of the other pile we will return further on. In his essay on the calabash carvings of the Babwende, Manker gives the following description of calabash I: "A man in a chief's cap, the dead man's successor, is receiving the gifts of the relatives for the burial. A man ceremoniously hands him a porcelain-jug (foreign) with spout and handle. It is to be put on the grave. Another one presents a large calabash with palm-wine, lashed in a palm-leaf basket on the porter's head. And along the trail a whole file of porters come with filled palm-leaf baskets (*ntete*, pl. *mintete* [sing. even *mutete* RW]) on their heads (fig. 3). Such a cargo can contain a good deal: cassava bread, peanuts, maize, gunpowder, empty bottles, cloth, blankets, etc. Every porter also brings a strip of matting, "*nkwala*". The *niombo* is to come well-stocked to the other world"⁷⁰). Other gifts, such as pigs, goats, bananas, plantains etc., were put aside for the *nkungi* feast as a sort of payment for those who had contributed to the shrouding"⁷¹).

8. *Grave-Clothes—Niombo Shroud*

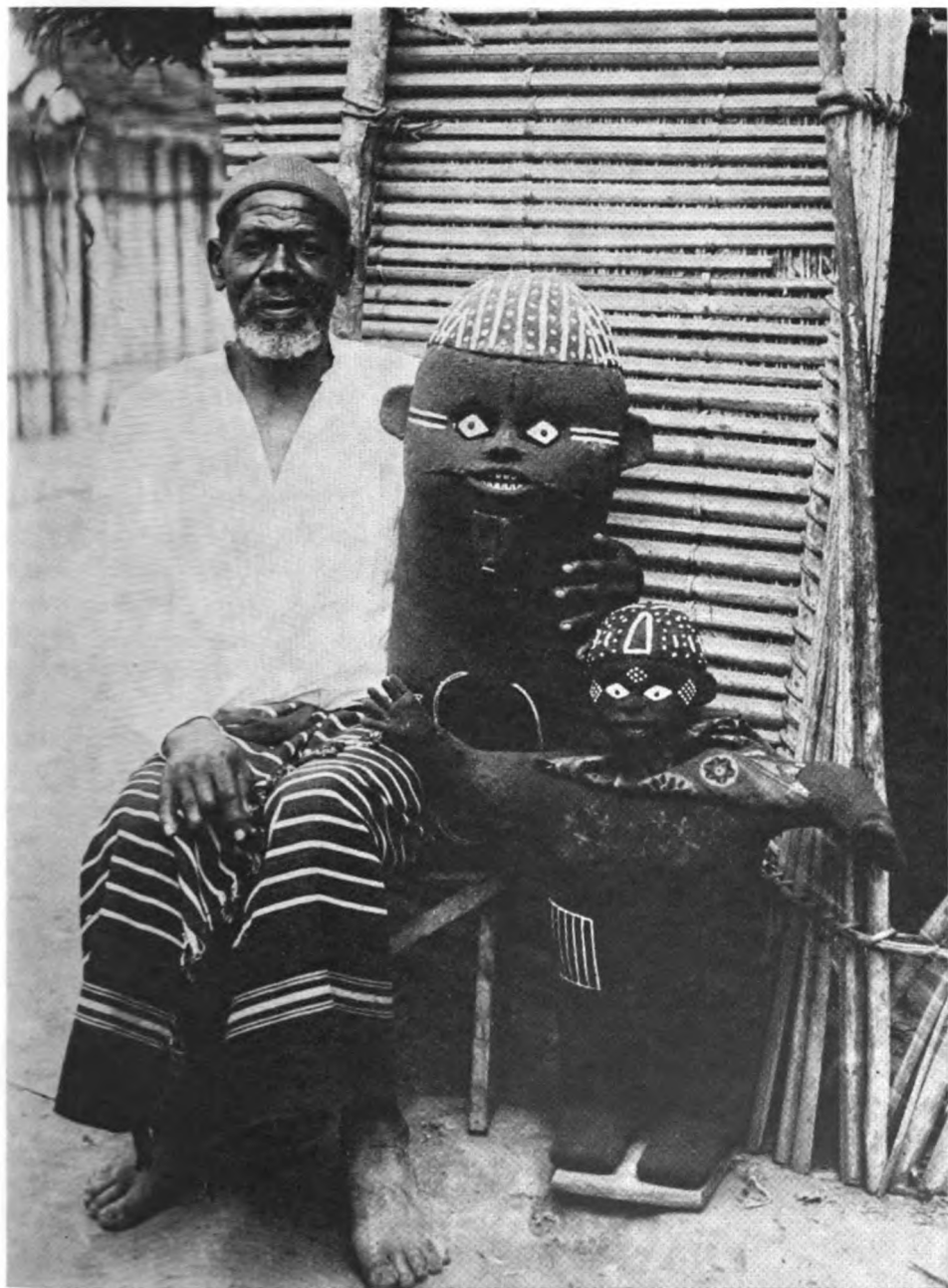
The next step in the burial preparations dealt with the shrouding or *niombo* attire, as it was also called sometimes. When it was considered that enough cloth and matting for the shrouding had been collected, an experienced corpse-swather was sent for"⁷²). They were found among the Babwende"⁷³). One of the widely known *niombo*-swathers was Makosa. When Öhrneman in 1926 visited Kingoyi and was allowed to film a *niombo* burial, Makosa was considered to be the only one left in the region who still knew this profession"⁷⁴). When the corpse-swather arrived at the house where the dead one was kept, he first looked carefully at the face, saw if the teeth were filed or not, and noted what tattooing

the body had⁷⁵). Öhrneman contends that the niombo's features then should represent those of the dead one⁷⁶). And Manker quotes him in one of his essays without confirming or denying the statement⁷⁷). If this information is correct, as there is cause to believe, then one also understands why the corpse-swather studied the dead person's features so carefully; the object was of course to reproduce them as true to life as possible. After the corpse-swather had examined the corpse, he brought out his tools, of which the needle and the scissors perhaps had the most important function, and shrouding could begin. No unauthorized person was allowed to be present at the shrouding⁷⁸). The corpse-swather first arranged the dried-up body "and commences to wrap it (i.e. the corpse RW) in all the shrouding cloth. Native raffia-fabric, gaudy European blankets of cotton, red blankets and decoratively braided nkwalá-mats are wrapped round the corpse, hundreds of layers, and a colossal bundle swells out, hiding the remains of the deceased in its midst"⁷⁹). Möller, Pagels and Glerup tell us the following: "When the corpse at last has become dry like a mummy, a costly operation begins consisting of wrapping it in as much cloth as can be produced. Several hundred—perhaps a thousand—metres are at times used for this when a great and rich chief is being buried. It happens that the burial is put off because it is not considered to be enough cloth for the shroud and that when the funeral procession in the end sets out, the corpse is wrapped



Ready dressed niombo on one of the calabashes described by Manker

in such an enormous amount of cloth that it is, altogether, 'big as a house' as the natives put it. (Most of the cloth sold to the Bakongo people is thus hidden and buried with the dead)"⁸⁰). The place in the hut where the niombo-shrouding is carried out, was called *kika* (pl. *bika*) by the Congolese⁸¹). In the skilled hands of the corpse-swather the ungainly bundle achieved "human shape, is provided with big, thick arms and legs and is wrapped in the outer shroud"⁸²). This outer shroud had to be of red or reddish cloth⁸³). "The arms, which like the legs are reinforced by a frame of strong basket-work, are held outstretched in an animated and expressive gesture, the left arm bent obliquely forward, the right one upward"⁸⁴). The legs were arranged in a dancing position or with the knees bent⁸⁵). Finally the head is attached. In most cases it was ordered by the dead man himself while he still was alive, and the corpse-swather then brought it with him when he came to do the shrouding. Manker describes it thus: "The niombo head is a plastic masterpiece, sewn from a red blanket and stuffed with soft grass and cotton. The features are life-like, the cheeks softly rounded, the mouth with its swelling lips is agape showing the teeth filed in accordance with clan usage, and the eyes are wide open with white and black lines painted round them. The beard of the dead man was surely not so big, but it commanded respect, and neither is the niombo's chin without it"⁸⁶). The niombo is now ready dressed. On one of the calabashes described by Manker there is a ready-dressed niombo pictured. He wears a chief's cap and a chin-beard and has a pipe in his mouth. On one shoulder he has a gun and on the other is his dog. On his arm hangs the ammunition pouch and powder-horn as well as the satchel with other utility articles⁸⁷). If the deceased during his life had carried a gun, then his niombo was also to carry one on the day of his funeral. The work that the deceased generally did while he lived, was given expression at his funeral⁸⁸). In his book Öhrneman describes the corpse-swather, Makosa, as "an old man with a grizzly goatee on his chin, gentle eyes and nice to chat with"⁸⁹). Walder has obviously seen another side of the old niombo-swather, too. He gives an account of an almost tragicomical scene, where a "chief had well-nigh been buried without the red head, for the one who had made it (i.e. Makosa RW) wanted so much for it that the people in the village would not buy it"⁹⁰). When Makosa "with a wily smile on his lips" at length had forced his price through, he even let himself be feasted with meat and drink in the house of mourning before he returned to his village again⁹¹). Walder writes of him further among other things: "All chiefs in these parts he had to shroud. For ingenuity and inventiveness there were few the likes of him among his people"⁹²). Missionary Karl Aldén has in a personal interview given an account of Makosa, whom he knew personally. Sometime in the nineteen thirties Makosa became a Christian. Whether he also afterwards continued to carry on his trade as a corpse-swather, Aldén could not inform me. On the other hand he recollected that the question was actively discussed in the



Corpse-swather Makosa with niombo head and miniature niombo

community at Kingoyi as Makosa's trade of course was intimately connected with the heathen conceptions of the people⁹³). It should be added that the head of a niombo was called *zizi* by the Congolese at Kingoyi, which can also mean face⁹⁴).

9. *A Niombo's Size*

The enormous bulk of a niombo has already been indicated. In a letter of August 18, 1905, written at Mukimbungu, Laman tells of a niombo burial in the neighbourhood of Kingoyi. It was an exceptionally huge niombo which we will get occasion of returning to later on. "It was about 3 metres high, had a well-shaped head with eyes, ears, etc. The width of the figure was about 4 metres. It had two large, wide feet, on which it could stand. The legs were thick but terribly short, about half a metre long. The arms were big and thick—one pointed upwards and one outwards—with utterly small hands and fingers"⁹⁵). If the deceased had left much cloth behind him, the niombo-swather might be occupied with the shrouding for several days. Several hundred pieces of cloth could be consumed. Decking the body out in so much cloth, was a manifestation of the family's wish to show that the deceased and his *kanda* (family) were rich. Furthermore the cloth that he brought with him into the grave, proved to those who lived in the land of the dead that the deceased was very rich and so would know how to honour him⁹⁶). Lundahl writes from Kingoyi on June 22, 1921, telling of a niombo burial that he had the opportunity to attend in a village. Among other things he says that the corpse had been wrapped in such an abundance of cloth and straw-mats "that it is two to two and a half metres high and one and a half metres wide"⁹⁷). Manker gives particulars, which Missionary Edv. Karlman, principal of Kingoyi training-college at the time, has supplied regarding a niombo-burial at the village of Kimbenza in 1925. Concerning the size of the niombo he states that the colossus was 3 metres high, 2.5 metres between the finger-tips and about 5 metres in circumference. It contained 114 pieces of cotton cloth together with masses of raffia cloth and mats, etc.⁹⁸). Missionary Aldén, who also was present on this occasion, writes about this niombo burial in the Kingoyi mission-station's diary for August 23, 1925, as follows: "Sunday. Today a great funeral in Kimbenza. Old Kapita Ngoma Ngwala has been laid to rest in his grave.—Now there has been dancing at Maduda as well as at Kimbenza owing to the death. We, the whites, went there to look at the 'corpse-man', who measured 3 metres between his finger-tips. The corpse has been dried for 2 months now in the house where he died"⁹⁹). At the interview with Aldén, mentioned earlier, he said that Kimbenza Kiamuzembo where the niombo burial took place, is an hour's walk distant from Kingoyi. The stench of the dried corpse was awful, and there were lots of flies on the huge colossus. 200 blankets, no less, had been used for the shrouding¹⁰⁰).

10. *A Niombo's Tattoos*

Quite an interesting thing connected with the niombo-shrouding is the tattooing, or rather the drawing done on the niombo and meant to represent tattoos. Laman writes: "Figures corresponding to the tattooing on the deceased are made on the face and on the body" (of the niombo RW)¹⁰¹). This is probably the reason why the corpse-swather always so carefully studied the dried corpse, its teeth and clan tattoos, before he began the work of



Corpse-swather Makosa (left) with ready dressed niombo

shrouding¹⁰²). About the tattooing Hammar writes among other things: "Sometimes one sees the picture of a crocodile on the upper arm or the belly"¹⁰³). To be sure it can be asked if Hammar here is guilty of mistaking a lizard for a crocodile, since it is known that the lizard symbolized life among the Bakongo. Laman writes as follows about this: "The lizard had in bygone days no doubt appeared to be the bearer of life or the symbol of life. The lizard had predominantly been woven into mats, carved on walls, old chests, calabashes, etc. On gravestones, too, I have found it. The women, and in some districts also the men, have had this figure tattooed on their bodies"¹⁰⁴). In the photograph section of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden's archives is a photograph of a young man with a lizard tattooed on the upper part of his chest, from the throat down towards the shoulder¹⁰⁵). On calabash V two ziniombo (pl. of niombo) are pictured on the same calabash that Manker describes in the following manner: "The body of the niombo to the right is covered by a cross-shaped ornament converging towards a square located at the navel, while the one to the left is distinguished by a confusion of squares, triangles, and bands"¹⁰⁶). The Santu-cross seems to have been a usual tattoo-design. Santu means saint, sacred. Manker writes of this: "Der Körper wird mit Tätowierungen, Klanabzeichen und symbolischen Zeichen verziert, unter denen ein Santu-Kreuz, der Jagdfetisch, der von der ersten christlichen Mission stammt, zu erkennen ist"¹⁰⁷). Even the niombo figures on some of the calabashes described by Manker have tattoos in the shape of Santu-crosses; one Santu figure has a plume decoration¹⁰⁸). In the archives of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden there are some twenty photographs of niombo figures which all have tattoos in the shape of squares, triangles and other geometrical designs. The cross in various sizes is also found. One quite frequent tattoo shows squares on edge placed on the top of each other so that the corners of the squares touch one another; they often extend from the upper part of the chest to below the navel. One of the most beautiful tattoos consists of a large square on edge that covers the whole stomach. It has a wide, finely drawn border round it and inside it is filled with small squares in precisely arranged rows. Many tattoos were, undoubtedly, rather incomprehensible to the uninitiated¹⁰⁹). Niombo tattoos had their prototypes in reality and this is evident from available photographs showing the decorative tattoos of the Congolese¹¹⁰).

11. *Several Corpses in One Niombo*

A particularly interesting fact, which has been confirmed from many directions, is that several corpses could sometimes be found in the same niombo. Laman writes that a niombo "frequently contains more than one corpse"¹¹¹). Börrisson has also mentioned this and it seems he considers the matter more or less known. He writes in brief: "If two corpses are wrapped in one figure, two such heads (i.e. niombo-heads RW) are put on"¹¹²). Manker quoting Börrisson states that



Niombo ready for his last journey

on no calabash did he find a reproduction confirming Börrisson's report about a niombo with two heads, although he by no means considers it unbelievable. Manker also refers to the fact that double-gods for example, wooden idols with two heads on the same body, are common in the Lower Congo¹¹³). Laman gives a notable description of a niombo burial at a village near Kingoyi, where a single niombo contained no less than four corpses. It was the niombo that he estimated as being 3 metres high and 4 metres in circumference. He writes: "There being room for 4 corpses in the colossus, was due to the fact that they had been dried over a fire. One of them, a girl, had had sleeping-sickness and had spent her last days at the feet of one of the bodies when it was being dried. She herself had not been dried. It should by right be one corpse (in a niombo RW) although there were four on this occasion"¹¹⁴).

12. *Clearing a Path to the Burial-Ground*

Still another matter had to be attended to before the burial. A path had to be cleared where the niombo was to pass. If the path went through a field of cassava, then these were simply pulled up by the roots¹¹⁵). "If a goat or a hen crosses the path it must be killed; and if the path goes over a field of manioc the manioc is pulled up by the roots. All wives are carefully watched, for if a woman is raped on the path there can be no lawsuit or punishment in connection herewith, 'for Navuda's swine alone shall bathe'¹¹⁶). The latter expression, Laman leaves without comment. To all appearances it is a proverb whose signification was known to the Congolese.

13. *Digging of the Grave*

When the path along which the niombo had to travel had been cleared, one task still remained before the burial could take place. The grave had to be dug. It had to be made very deep because the corpse, i.e. the niombo, was buried in a standing or sitting position, as distinguished from what was customary at an ordinary burial, where the deceased was buried in a lying position. The depth of the grave varied depending on the wealth and importance of the deceased. The grave of more important persons was so deep that those digging had to be pulled out of it with the aid of ropes. The earth was hoisted up in baskets. The grave-diggers did not use hoes, they used bars of mbota-wood that had been sharpened¹¹⁷). Those who dug the grave were brothers-in-law and other relatives of the deceased, both men and women. The latter had to empty the baskets of the earth hoisted out of the grave. If some members of the dead person's kanda (family) did not appear, there was great sorrow among the mourners, for this was a sign of disrespect to the deceased, who might forsake his niombo in the hour of burial. Moreover, those who did not attend the burial would fail to secure the blessing of the deceased, for those present,

to be sure, shared between them the portion of cloth left over from the swathing, and this was tantamount to the blessing of the one departed¹¹⁸). It was also necessary that all relatives assemble to dig the grave in order to prevent the deceased from raising his head in the burial copse¹¹⁹). To test if the grave was deep enough the tallest of the diggers had to descend into it. If his head did not reach above the edge of the grave when a gun was placed across it, they knew the depth to be sufficient¹²⁰). From other particulars given below it would seem that a good deal greater depth had to be reckoned upon. However, as indicated earlier, the depth depended on whether the deceased were to be buried standing or sitting¹²¹). It took two or three days to dig the grave¹²²).

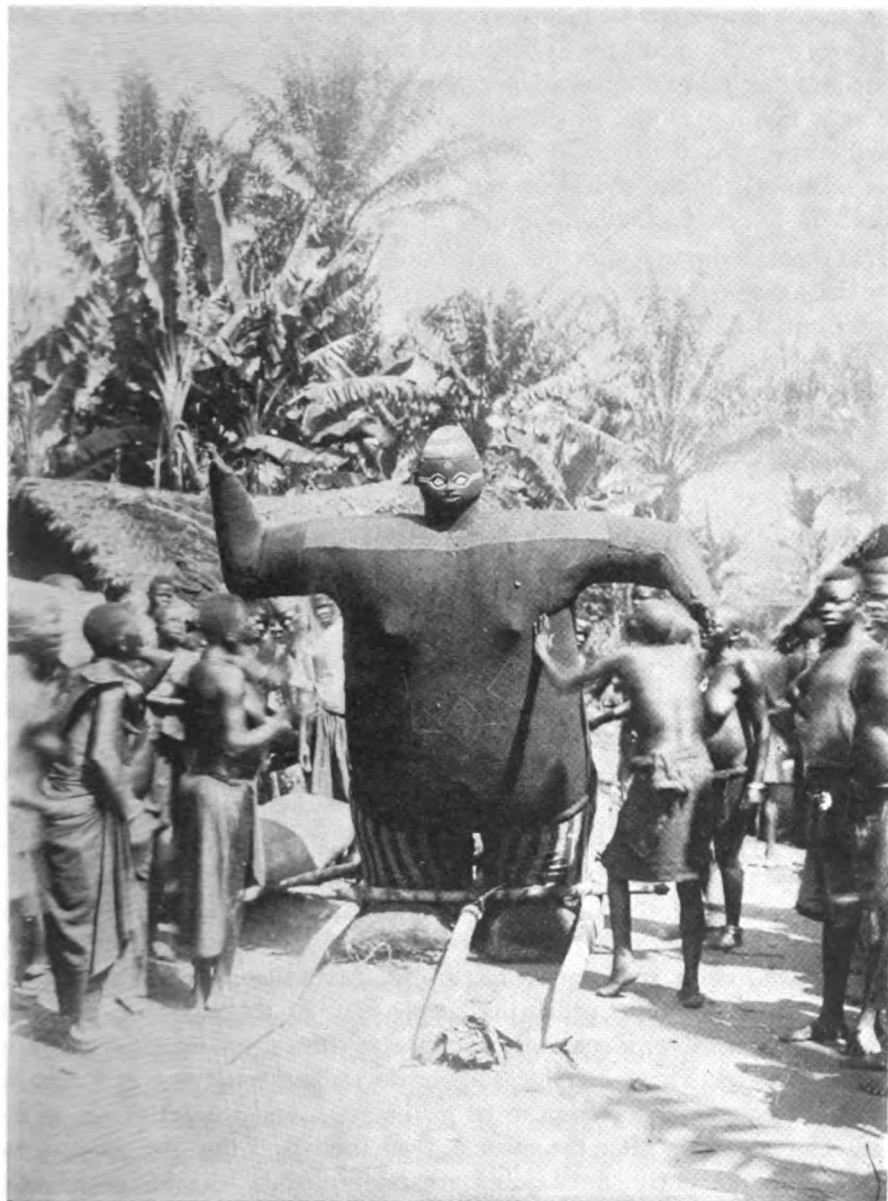
II. BURIAL CEREMONY

1. *Dancing before the Interment*

When the day for the burial of a chief or other important person was fixed, there was dancing in his village and even other villages, at times for several nights in succession. Walder reports from Kingoyi: "Last week the people in our nearest village danced for a whole night and they said: 'We should dance for two more nights but for your sake we will not do so'. The reason for this dancing was the coming burial of the village chief, who had died five weeks ago"¹²³).

2. *Funeral Procession and Interment*

On the day of the funeral there was great commotion in the village of the deceased personage. "A few hours before the funeral, the dancing stopped (which usually had gone on for several days RW), and the musicians were richly regaled with food consisting of plantains and a whitish gruel, which was brought in a big dish. They did not use spoons, instead they had folded small plantain leaves, which served as spoons"¹²⁴). Everyone who had contributed towards the niombo shroud was now amply treated to meat and drink. After the meal was over the dancing commenced. The niombo was lifted up on a bier or frame. The orchestra consisting of drums and trumpets struck up their inciting music to which the niombo danced through the movements of his bearers. Everyone was seized by ecstatic delirium. Everyone had to join in the dancing, for it was the last time the deceased took part in it. But then the niombo came to a standstill and the dancing ceased. Now the niombo was finished with his dancing. He was ready for his last journey. He bids farewell to his village¹²⁵). The bier consisted of two or three rather long carrying-poles with cross-bars to which the niombo's feet were fastened¹²⁶). Then the funeral procession was formed. The calabash carvings discussed by Manker have several vivid motifs from a niombo's journey to his last resting-place¹²⁷). Walder has given a detailed description of such a journey. He writes: "At about four o'clock in the afternoon when all preparations had been made, the women assembled for the last time round the dead man to cry and bid him farewell. When they had cried a while, a young man stepped out on the road to the grave and fired two shots. After that the large funeral procession amounting to several hundred people, got under way. His wives, however, were not allowed to come



Women taking leave of their dead chief

along to the grave but had to remain in the village. When they drew near the grave, some wanted him to be carried to the mission-station before he was lowered into the grave, for he had been a friend of the whites. Amid loud shouting and at a rapid pace the procession now proceeded to the mission where it turned into the yard. Then the procession turned back and continued to the grave where a frightful din broke out, because they could not agree upon the manner in which to lower him into the grave that was five metres deep. After a heated dispute and much shouting the corpse was lowered into the grave in an upright position"¹²⁸). Öhrneman was of the opinion that the niombo burial he had an opportunity of being present at had "the character of a popular amusement rather than a ceremony of grief"¹²⁹). This state of things must of course be seen against the background of what the Congolese put into the funeral ceremony itself. Manker has no doubt got hold of something fundamental when he writes: "At the burial it is not the memory of the deceased alone that is to be celebrated but also his still living spirit, which has been equipped for the journey to the beyond and is impressively honoured, so that he will not come back, displeased and angry"¹³⁰). And when one has created a niombo, which can successfully compete with earlier ziniombo, then one has the right to express satisfaction. But disregarding the somewhat peculiar manifestations of joy, the niombo burials of the Babwende stand out as "both magnificent and peculiar"¹³¹). In his monograph Laman has given a detailed description of a niombo's journey to his last resting place and it is worth to be noted. He writes: "On the day of the burial the children and grandchildren of the deceased must all assemble without any exception, as must also those who have taken their spouses from his kanda. The younger children and grandchildren must carry the corpse to the grave. If it is so bulky that it cannot be got through the doorway, the wall is pulled down. On the occasion of a more high class funeral about ten men may precede the corpse to fire off salvoes, followed by others who strike gongs and beat drums. After these comes the crier, who begins the burial songs in which the people join. At the end of the procession there may be also some persons who are to fire shots simultaneously with those at its head. Those carrying the corpse walk a few steps and then stop, as if the deceased was reluctant to go to the grave and wished to return to his home. The one salvo after the other is then fired, and the procession resumes its march to the grave. Such jokes are performed by the children and the grandchildren. Those in front may even turn round with the corpse to go home again. But in this case the very youngest come up to the edge of the road and turn, so to speak, the corpse in the direction of the grave again.—Among the strophes sung again and again on the way to the grave may be mentioned the following: 'Ah this, I am a child of this Mayombe!' Or: 'peace nganga! Oh, leave him alone! I am a child of this chief!' Or: 'A splendend young man has buried his master.' Arrived at the burial place they strike gongs, beat various kinds of drums



Dancing niombo

and blow trumpets. A lot of gunpowder is shot off and burial chants are sung. When the corpse is lowered into the grave the young people begin to dance; and when the grave is filled in they all return home to the accompaniment of music"¹³²). Börrisson writes that the deceased was buried with pomp and circumstance, procession or dancing with the "mvumbi" (see what is said above about the expressions "niombo"—"mvumbi" RW), in the course of which he is finally made to jump down into a grave, rather like a well, wherein he is buried in an upright position.¹³³). In an article written at Nganda on 24 October, 1904, Hammar reports that drinking took place at the dance preceding the day of the funeral. "When they had mourned enough and added to the volume of the corpse by cloth until it was big enough, they one night arranged dancing and drinking, singing and music with drums and trumpets. The following day they buried the corpse"¹³⁴). Laman has given a description worth attention. He writes: "When the colossus is ready—without head—and moved out in front of the house of

mourning, the funeral ceremonies begin. The women of the village and invited women assemble for dancing when the music-band of 6 to 7 members with a sort of wooden trumpets and a wooden drum, strike up for dancing. They blow and beat the drum while they walk round in a ring making all sorts of gestures, the women sing, dance and clap their hands. Their dance consists of jumping up and down with the ugliest, most horrible, and many times obscene gestures. To protect their hands they have leaves or a pad to beat upon for it must smack resoundingly. If one of the women has a baby, it is carried on her back and is mercilessly jolted. The girls must join in the dancing and are forced to dance for several hours. Meanwhile the mourning widows and female relatives sit round the huge corpse, weeping so that the tears are continually flowing down their cheeks smeared with black. The colossus still lies headless on the ground"¹³⁵). When the dancing after some hours stopped, the head was attached on the corpse-colossus, and with that everything was ready for the journey to his last resting-place. Referring to the burial-place, Hammar writes that it could be located "in the forest outside the village or by the path. Sometimes it happened that the deceased was buried in the middle of the village or in his own house"¹³⁶). When all preparations for the funeral procession had been made, the young people heaved the niombo up and down, "to let it dance in that manner. All women then jump, keeping pace with the corpse, the men set off with the colossus, staggering now one way now another under much fuss and noise. Two of them keep it in balance with ropes. Safely arrived at the grave they have a hard job in getting it into the grave. Everyone is afraid of getting into it. Even here they let the corpse dance, and the women then dance too. At last they succeed in getting it into the four metre deep grave, which is filled in amid laughing and romping"¹³⁷).

3. *Strange Behaviour Connected with the Interment*

Several sources have noted the peculiar behaviour of the funeral procession in connection with the interment and even after it. Öhrneman has written and described how the female relatives of the deceased bade farewell to their kinsman before the niombo was lowered into the grave. He writes: "Before the interment a scene takes place, which probably appears more moving to us, the whites, than to the blacks themselves. When the bearers have put down the corpse at the edge of the grave, the female relatives lamenting loudly step forward and caressingly stroke the peculiar shroud with their hands. Cautiously the corpse is moved nearer the grave, the carrier poles are unfastened and after a little shifting the deceased sinks into the bowels of the earth"¹³⁸). Walder has an odd description in two of his essays on niombo burials. He writes from Kingoyi on 14 May, 1903: "At the very instant when it (the niombo-corpse RW) reached the bottom of the grave, everyone jumped up into the air while they raised a loud cry exactly as if they had had an electric shock. Then some straw



Niombo fastened to his bier and ready for departure to the music of blowers and drummers

mats were laid on the top of the corpse, after which the grave was filled with earth"¹³⁹). In another connection he gives pretty much the same description and adds: "On the grave-mound a stick was put in a slanting position, and on it hung a basket, which the chief was to use in the other world"¹⁴⁰). This odd act must surely be taken as an attempt by those left behind to escape the influence of the spirits causing death. The earth is the connecting link between the dead person and the living, which needs to be broken at the moment the deceased touches it. Kaj Birket-Smith quotes Professor Rafael Karsten when he writes: "Many mourning customs are regarded as attempts to shake off the influence of the death-causing spirits and in many cases this opinion presumably characterizes the signification that the primitive people invest it with. When, for example, the Babwende tribe in the Belgian Congo consider it necessary for the mourners to run a short distance after the funeral in order not to die themselves, it is obviously a flight away from death"¹⁴¹). Manker takes up Walder's description and makes the following addition: "The earthly connection with the deceased is at an end. But the one who neglected to jump or was so old and weak that he could not, he turns back homewards uneasy, and people look at him, for also he will soon pass away"¹⁴²). Manker expresses the same thing in his essay 'Niombo'¹⁴³). Bearing in mind what takes place at the

grave when the deceased is lowered into it, Laman writes: "When the corpse (niombo RW) is lowered into the grave the young people begin to dance"¹⁴⁴). It is reasonable to presume that this dance in like manner serves the purpose quoted above. Part of the funeral ceremony is also that "the closest relative throws the first earth upon the niombo, after which they all help each other to fill up the grave"¹⁴⁵). Still another peculiar occurrence, which could take place at a chief's burial, has been described by Hammar in a letter from Nganda dated 24 October, 1904. The man who had died had been a leper. "A few days after his death a woman took to praying and singing for a whole day and night in order to induce the spirits not to harm the people, the village as a whole, the houses, the pigs, the water, etc. At the same time she asked them to do their evil in other villages instead. She went from house to house, carrying a rattle in her hand that she shook all the time." The incident occurred at Sundi Mamba¹⁴⁶).

4. *People Buried Alive with a Niombo*

Not seldom it happened in bygone days that persons, slaves for choice, were buried together with their deceased chief. Laman writes about this: "In the case of a very wealthy person, especially a chief who has bought slaves, one or more of the latter are not infrequently sent down into the grave to receive the corpse and to 'lull' it. But when an enormously swathed nyombo is lowered, it holds the slaves fast and the grave is filled in, so that they are buried alive. Many possessions, such as packs of cloth and so forth, are thrown in. All these things are done in order that it may everywhere be known, even in the realm of the dead, how rich the deceased has been. One of the reasons why slaves are made to accompany the deceased into the grave is that in this case he will not so insistently desire those remaining, and will thus not come and fetch them"¹⁴⁷). The slaves who were buried alive had to sit in the grave with crossed legs so that the niombo could be put on their laps. In that way the deceased would be honoured and the news of the great chief would spread in the villages¹⁴⁸).



Touching farewell scene before niombo's departure from his village

III. CUSTOMS TO OBSERVE AFTER BURIAL

1. *Burning of the Deceased's House*

When the funeral ceremony was finished they returned to the village, where the house of the deceased was burnt¹⁴⁹). This was done "so that the deceased would not return to the village". For the same reason food remaining in the house was put in the grave in connection with the interment, so "that the deceased may eat when hungry"¹⁵⁰).

2. *Burial Festivities—Nkungi Feast—Thanksgiving Feast*

When everything belonging to the funeral ceremony itself, had come to an end, the burial celebration in the village was in store¹⁵¹). This festivity was called the *nkungi celebration*. Laman translate the word "nkungi" by funeral ceremony, the death meal, festivity with much food and diversion in general¹⁵²). Even in other connections Laman speaks of "great festivities" after the burial "with dancing, meat and drink"¹⁵³). The nkungi celebration could consequently come directly after the burial, or it could be put off for one or two years¹⁵⁴). The great celebration which succeeded the burial had mostly the character of a sumptuous feast accompanied by dancing and music and great amounts of food and drink. When all the people were gathered together "like the teeth in the mouth of the pig" the ngoma and tangala drums were heard and shots were fired. The young men and women danced energetically, for their chief had been well-known and wealthy. Animals were slaughtered and many cauldrons of cooked food and palm-wine were distributed among the various village communities, each village with its chief making up a unit. If the nkungi celebration took place directly after the burial, a matondo celebration (thanksgiving celebration) took place after about a year when gifts were distributed to all those who had brought gifts for the niombo shroud. The chief of the dead person's kanda (family) must at that time "wash his hands of this concern", i.e. repay the gifts of persons who had given mafunda (i.e. gifts for the burial). One person who had given four or five pieces of mbandu-cloth was to have a pig, one who had given two pieces of mbandu-cloth received a goat. If the contribution had been one or two pieces of cloth, the donor was given four or five chickens. It was then the turn of the women who had rubbed themselves with mourning grease. They were given excellent food and drink, new loin-cloths and clothing instead of the mourning apparel they had worn



Musicians preceding niombo on the way to the burial-place

in the house of mourning; they were also given the bed on which they had been concreated when the deceased was removed. During the festivity several competing groups of musicians performed, vying with each other in collecting most of the dancers. But the dancers could not run from one group to another but had to stick to the one they first had joined. This was strictly looked after by the chief. Firmly he also insisted that the outsiders behave properly while visiting the village and that no disturbances and no adultery occur¹⁵⁵).

3. Musical Instruments Used at Burials

Over and over again, the musical instruments used at niombo burials have been indicated. Manker mentions "drums and trumpets"¹⁵⁶). He also says that trumpets were made "partly from hollow mangrove roots and partly from hollowed-out thick pieces of light wood"¹⁵⁷). An orchestra could be made up of six trumpets with so-called transverse trumpets or side-blown trumpets, three of which could be of the kind held obliquely or diagonally and three, vertically¹⁵⁸). In his article on calabash carvings Manker makes the following commentary on Calabash II, figure 22: "The orchestra is composed of six blowers with side-blown wooden trumpets. The third and fourth musicians have trumpets of hollowed-out aerial roots. These roots supply an excellent material for trumpets. While the outside wood becomes hard and strong, the

inside of the root decays and can then easily be taken out. Hence suitable roots are chopped off at the tree-trunk and left to decay until they are suitable for hollowing out"¹⁵⁹). On Calabash V, figure 10, he comments as follows: "To the niombo pageantry also belongs two drummers"¹⁶⁰). Calabash IX, figure 17, he describes in the following manner: "The musicians have trumpets of hollowed-out tree roots, wooden drums with skin stretched across their openings and . . . 'ndungu anti'. It is a small, flat, half-moon-shaped drum with a narrow opening along the edge. It is beaten with a hard stick of wood"¹⁶¹). Laman writes that when a funeral procession reached the burial-ground they struck gongs and beat various kinds of drums and blew horns or trumpets¹⁶²). And during the dancing in connection with the burial-feast ngoma and tangala drums were used¹⁶³). The curator at the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Dr. Bertil Söderberg, has in a big work dealt with the musical instruments of the Lower Congo. Here he also discusses in detail the particular instruments mentioned in connection with niombo burials. Of the wind instruments there are two kinds of trumpets: side-blown trumpets and so-called ludi trumpets. The side-blown trumpet are the simplest ones, made as they are of thick tree-roots or hollowed-out boughs. These trumpets were held diagonally when blown. The ludi trumpets were generally thicker and held vertically when played. The latter could be 1 to 1½ m. long. These two kinds of trumpets might have sculptures in the shape of heads at the top. On calabashes from Bwende the ludi trumpet has been reproduced in connection with niombo burials¹⁶⁴). The tangala drum mentioned earlier was made of nsanga-nsanga wood. This drum was heavier than the ndungu drum mentioned below, for example, but it was only about 1 m. long. The tangala drum had a drum-skin fastened with string or leather thongs. This drum was beaten with two drumsticks¹⁶⁵). The ndungu drum was long and thin as distinguished from the tangala drum. Its pitch could vary from drum to drum. The one with the deepest pitch was called ngudi (mother) and the one with a higher pitch, mwana (child). The biggest of these drums was called ndungu a ntuntani or ndungu a yilu (=yulu = heaven). This drum, too, was made out of nsanga-nsanga wood¹⁶⁶). The drum Manker calls ndungu anti was thus the half-moon-shaped drum with an opening along the edge. The word "nti" means wood and therefore the expression ndungu anti really means ndungu drum of wood¹⁶⁷). Another drum mentioned in connection with niombo burials is the ngoma drum. It is produced from a hollowed-out tree-trunk with a skin stretched over the opening. It is some 75 cm. high and has a diameter of about 25 cm.¹⁶⁸). In bygone days kunda bells played an important rôle in the religious life of the Lower Congo. They are also found on various ornaments, as for example on the calabash carvings from the Manianga territory in the former Belgian Congo, where they were connected with niombo burials. They are either single or double and made of wood. Now, they have all but vanished. A kunda bell measured about 10 to 20 cm. in length



Musical instruments customary at niombo burials



Drums and wind instruments of different kinds

and 4 to 6 cm. in width¹⁶⁹). One more instrument often mentioned above is the gong. Söderberg presumes it here is a question of iron gongs, which could sometimes be single and sometimes double. These gongs are known as the emblems of a chief, and it is therefore most likely that they were used at a chief's burial¹⁷⁰).

4. *Partition of Inheritance*

On the day after the funeral the relatives of the deceased assembled to divide up his estate. The property consisted mainly of his widows, who then were apportioned and taken possession of by the relatives, provided they were not anew to be married off in exchange for property as often occurred¹⁷¹). Hammar writes about the right to inherit property, among other things: "When the husband dies, the wife and children inherit nothing, and his nearest male relatives, his brothers, instead, take what he possibly has left behind. If he has no brothers, the children of this sisters are his heirs and have to accept the debts as well as the assets left behind, and if there are debts, the next of kin assume responsibility for these"¹⁷²).

5. *Adorning of Graves*

After the burial, the adornment of the grave was an important matter. Laman says that a chief's grave could be fitted up with all sorts of things, like china-figures, guns, umbrellas, powder-kegs, elephant-tusks, etc. Of porcelain-ware there might be found mugs with holes made in the bottoms so that they would not be stolen, plates, kitchen utensils, jars, different kinds of porcelain articles brought from the coast to be placed on the grave to mark the prosperity the deceased had enjoyed in this life. It was also thought that all these things could be used after death. Everyone belonging to the deceased's kanda (family) must place something on the grave. Hence food was put there directly after the funeral for since the deceased had been transformed into a nkuyu, spirit, he could partake of it. For this reason palm-wine was also poured out over the grave. The gunpowder kegs were a proof of the amount of powder shot off at the burial¹⁷³). Hammar describes pretty much the same thing as follows: "The grave is adorned with the deceased's household utensils and arms, the more ornaments there are, the more important the deceased to all appearances has been in life. The ornaments are rendered unusable before they are put on the grave, most likely not to be stolen"¹⁷⁴). Laman has an interesting description of the care devoted to the memory of the dead chief. He writes: "If a more important chief has died, palm-wine is poured out on his grave for a long time. In addition the so-called heart of animals killed is offered up. When hoeing the grave clean, several salvoes are fired. If it is a 'great' head of family, much care is devoted to him. In some places he is buried in his own house or in the family's common

assembly-house, where he earlier has sat drinking palm-wine with his own people. At night a fire is kept going in the house and someone sleeps there. When something is drunk the first cup is always poured on the grave. Often a big effigy of mats is made, an image in sitting position with one arm reaching upwards and the other forwards representing a gesture of a person alive and speaking. In front of him the palm-wine is poured. A scrap of the killed animal's heart is also put there. If he is buried nearby, a house or a roof is often built over the grave and palm-wine and meat is to be offered there. Even food is set out and hunting gear put up. Often the burial-place is made into a public place for blending and drinking palm-wine lest the dead be forgotten"¹⁷⁵). In the archives of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden there are quite a few photos of the mentioned figures that remind one of niombo figures in miniature"¹⁷⁶). About the grave-adornment Manker writes: "On the grave-mound are the deceased's household utensils, his weapons and a lot of other things. But nothing is whole or fit for use in this world. Small holes have been knocked in pottery and calabashes and the weapons are slightly broken. Every article is wrecked in some way—without the damage being too visible. It is not because of thieves that they have rendered the grave-goods unserviceable. Nobody would dare to steal from a grave. No, the cause lies deeper. Only as 'dead' can the deceased's possessions be of use to him"¹⁷⁷). It is interesting to note Manker's deviating opinion compared with that of Hammar and Laman concerning the reason for wrecking the grave-goods. But Manker is by no means alone in his interpretation of this phenomenon. From "Notes Analytiques sur les Collections Ethnographiques du Musée du Congo" the following can be quoted: "Les tombes du Bas-Congo sont généralement des tertres jonchés de vaisselle ou de porcelaine voyante qu'on a soin de briser. On a cru que les indigènes en agissent ainsi pour éviter les rapt, leur mobile est très probablement tout autre. Ils 'tuent' ces objets destinés à suivre le mort dans l'autre vie, comme ils tuent les esclaves destinés à l'y servir. Pour passer de cette vie dans l'autre, les objets comme les êtres vivants doivent 'mourir', subir l'épreuve de la mort. Il est bon de remarquer à ce propos, et cela confirme notre opinion, que l'indigène n'oserait à aucun prix profaner une tombe"¹⁷⁸). Möller, Pagels and Gleerup have also noted the custom of placing broken objects on the graves. They write: "The grave is covered with broken pottery"¹⁷⁹). They report what may be found on a grave and among other things mention plates, empty gin-bottles and china-mugs. According to the native point of view these things are all "killed" because they have, for example, holes knocked through them. "Perhaps this custom of 'killing' the household utensils (to break, get broken, is by the natives termed 'kufoua', which signifies 'to die') before they are put on the grave, implies that spiritually they are to accompany their late master. I am inclined to believe that this is the case although I have not received any direct answer from the natives to my questions about this. To be

sure, the negroes are very reserved about anything touching these matters; they become depressed and anxious when death is spoken of"¹⁸⁰). In the archives of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden there are two interesting photographs of Congolese graves. One of ancient date shows a chief's grave in Mukimbungu with all sorts of things, such as bottles, basins, jars, bowls, etc., and most of them seem to be damaged¹⁸¹). The other photo is taken considerably later, which is apparent from its style. Here the contact with western culture has been felt for the grave is fenced round by a border and at one of its short sides there is a stone with an inscription. On the grave-mound, however, is on the whole found the sort of things described above, except for objects of native make¹⁸²).

6. *Fate of Widows*

The fate of the widows of the deceased man of substance was all but easy. We have already seen from Hammar's description that they inherited nothing from him¹⁸³). We have also seen that in the event no time had been prescribed for their widowhood, they were divided among the male relatives in connection with the partition of the inheritance following the burial or they were married off again in exchange for other property¹⁸⁴). Laman writes that the widows of a chief or other venerable person were tormented in many ways by the family of the deceased¹⁸⁵). We have already been acquainted with their all but enviable lot during the time before the funeral when the corpse was dried. The time of widowhood could last a whole year, when they had to stay indoors, mourning and bewailing the departed one. During that time their faces must be smeared with mourning-pomade. If they went out for a call of nature, their faces had to be covered. They must not talk with any man during the whole time. Only their own relatives had the right to address them. When the time of mourning was over, they must give three chickens to the deceased's family before they were allowed to go far enough from the house to see the path leading to the village. They could not be present at a market until after the nkungi celebration, in case this did not take place directly after the burial¹⁸⁶). Sometimes, in their loneliness, the widows were allowed to make baskets. At the end of the mourning period they might be allowed to return to their own families when these had to repay the marriage pledge to their late husband's family. This on condition that they had not been given as a share of the inheritance to one of the deceased's male relatives or were given away in marriage in exchange for other possessions¹⁸⁷).

7. *Corpses Buried Twice*

At times it happened that the deceased did not come to rest peacefully in his grave, and then his spirit returned to the village to torment those left behind. This could be due to his having been buried in a lonely place and therefore

felt lonesome. The corpse could then be dug up and buried again within the family's burial-ground. But it might also happen that the undecayed shroud was taken off and only what had rotted was left on, whereupon firewood was tied round the corpse and the whole was burnt. The undamaged cloth was washed and sold in the market¹⁸⁸).

IV. INTERPRETATION OF THE NIOMBO CULT

1. *Background of the Niombo Cult—Ancestor Cult*

From what has been said it appears evident that the niombo cult is strongly connected with the ancestor-cult, in fact it is widely spread not only in the Lower Congo but also in other regions of the African continent. Earlier on we have also seen that at a niombo burial it was not in the first place a question of doing honour to the memory of the deceased, attention was instead given to the still living soul that they were anxious to equip for the journey to the spirit world¹⁸⁹). We have also seen how palm-wine and hearts of animals killed were offered on the ancestor's grave. The more important he had been in life, the greater the attention given him after death¹⁹⁰). Laman has described how ancestor worship started. He writes: "The communication between the dead and the living is vivid indeed. The dead help the living and vice versa when difficulties occur. One gives the dead what they wish and need by setting out a few things on the grave. Through *banganga* (medicine-men, priests) it is possible to get still closer in touch with them, and to ask and receive their advice and help. These conceptions gave rise to ancestor worship. The motive is, for one thing, this communication between the dead and the living and, for another, the power that the fathers, the heads of families, and the clan are thought to possess while they live and after they die. Certain fathers and chiefs, while alive, are reputed to have this power as well as a variety of other powers and, when dead, they become subjects of cult. Large or small images, idols, are made of them and these images become possessed with the power and spirit of those they represent. Houses are also built for them to serve, partly, as their shelter for the night when they come to the village and, partly, for pouring out palm-wine and bringing other offerings"¹⁹¹). Laman writes further: "The ancestor cult in the first place includes the 'fathers of families' (*mase*), recently deceased, and then 'the old' (*bakulu*, *binunu*), ancestors who died long ago. The principal motive for this cult is the 'power' that the fathers and heads of families and the chiefs of the clan were thought to possess while they lived as well as after they had died. The 'paternal power' (*kitata*) and the 'maternal power' (*kingudi*) are of great importance.—Those who had died a long time ago and then been forgotten, are given little thought. But these *bakulu* and *binunu* (old, over-age) are respectfully spoken of. In general, the recently deceased are called *nkuyu* or *bankuyu*, but it is principally those who reappear, walk the earth, harass the living that are thought of. The

communion between the dead and the living is due to their sense of affinity with their clan”¹⁹²). Thus seen the niombo burials are more understandable to the occidental observer. The cruel custom of burying especially slaves alive together with their dead chiefs is made clear when seen against the background of the Congolese belief that the desire of the deceased to visit a living relative could be prevented and at the same time the human sacrifice rendered him a service that he might be in need of in the world of the spirits. We know they believed that when a deceased person wanted one of his family, or perhaps even an enemy, to die, a palaver was as a rule held about it in the world of the spirits. The “old” could then approve or oppose it. In the latter case the sick person’s *nsala* (soul) was returned and the individual in question recovered ¹⁹³). How deeply the ancestor cult affected the religious life of the Congolese, appears from Manker’s description of a niombo burial: “The deceased may also get a little hut on his grave. His spirit very likely manages without a house of wooden poles and grass but he ought to be kindly disposed towards those left behind when he finds such a proof of their kind consideration. The grave-hut may even be a temple where the descendants with offering and prayer for help, appeal to their forefathers”¹⁹⁴). All their efforts, then, went into keeping the deceased satisfied and thereby gaining his good will¹⁹⁵). The deceased must not enter the world of the dead as a beggar for it would injure his reputation, which in its turn would be visited upon the descendants, who therefore made his departure from this life as pompous as possible¹⁹⁶). As an expression of the ancestor cult the wooden idols shaped as human figures ought to be mentioned. They were found in great numbers in the Lower Congo and then even among the Babwende¹⁹⁷).

2. *Potential Influences from Without. Burial Rites of Other Tribes —A Comparison*

The question whether the niombo cult of the Babwende has been influenced by outside sources, or borrowed from elsewhere, is not easy to answer. Perhaps a reply to that question can most easily be found by comparing the niombo cult with other phenomena, similar in part. It is then found that the niombo cult of the Babwende has many traits in common with the burial rites of other tribes, but it also contains a good deal not found outside the territory of the Babwende.

a) *Mummification*

The mummification of bodies by drying or other means would seem to be quite common and a generally widespread phenomenon in many quarters of the world. In Africa it appears quite common. It was for example the practice in the old Kingdom of the Congo. Murdock writes thereof: When the sovereign died, the holy fire that had been maintained during the whole of his

reign and likewise the fires of domestic hearths all round the kingdom were put out and all work ceased. His body was mummified by smoke-drying, shrouded in much cloth and buried together with human victims¹⁹⁸). Baumann gives several examples of mummification in Africa. Between Senegal and Abyssinia in the Soudan he indicates a cultural stratum that he calls Neo-Soudanese. There he points out that certain customs are practised when kings are buried, which are characteristic of the Neo-Soudanese as, for example, smoke-drying and mummifying the corpse (the intestines are washed and dried and replaced by plants or honey), the burial of the king's body by a watercourse, and the presence of relics that play a certain rôle in worshipping the royal remains¹⁹⁹). Among the Louba and the Lounda in the southern Congo, he says that certain parts of the body, the royal remains, in particular the cranium, are kept as objects of cult²⁰⁰). He also mentions the region round the Zambezi, where they think that the king after death is turned into a worm in the body and later into a beast of prey, and where the special preparation of the royal remains, like drying, is connected with this conception²⁰¹). Even among the Central Soudanese, who have been influenced by Neo-Soudanese culture, one comes across, according to Baumann, the custom of burying the wives with the dead king, and smoke-drying the royal remains²⁰²). Among the Djoukon tribe in the Central Soudan, where ritual killing of the king was practised, his body was mummified²⁰³).

Möller, Pagels and Glerup report from the Kuilu region that "the Kuilu negroes bury their dead but first the corpses are put through a drying process. For this purpose it is placed on a scaffolding underneath which a steady fire is kept up." The drying process went on for a couple of months²⁰⁴). Here it is impossible not to note the striking resemblance to the way of proceeding at a niombo burial among the Babwende. Among the Lambas in Northern Rhodesia about 2 months pass from the time a chief has died until his remains are buried in a bark canoe. In the meantime the shrouded corpse has reached an advanced state of decay in the deceased's hut²⁰⁵). R. Verley has given interesting descriptions of the practices of two tribes in Angola. He writes: "L'antique tradition veut que le corps des chefs ne soit jamais abandonné et qu'il reste à l'abri de toute profanation. Ce n'est qu'à cette condition que l'esprit du grand trépassé continuera à veiller et à protéger son peuple. Il fallait surtout que sa dépouille charnelle soit conservée, pieusement"²⁰⁶). About the *Kimbundu* tribe he states that, when mummifying, one first removed all inside organs of the deceased and then carefully sewed up the body. After that the nostrils were cut off and the brain was taken out, and then the inside organs together with the nostrils were interred. The body was thereafter placed in a sitting position with its arms close to the body and its legs close together, after which a great quantity of boiling palm-oil was poured down through its mouth into the body. The palm-oil was so prepared that it formed a hard, solid block when it became set. By this



Swathed Bateke corpse

method all flesh was burnt away inside the body. Thus prepared the body with exception of the head was wrapped, not in a shroud but in the still moist hide of an ox sacrificed for this special purpose. When the hide dried, it shaped itself to the body as a solid cover and thus took the place of the bandage used by the Egyptians when they embalmed their mummies. The particular oxhide used on this occasion was called *ntu y' on' gombe* or *m'bantu y' on' gombe*, while oxhide in general was called *otshipa ti on' gombe*. The mummified body enclosed in its *ntu* was then placed on a small chair in the *dumi* and with that it was ready. After a year or two the head was separated from the body. This mummification method, Verley thinks, was introduced in Angola by the so-called real Bantu when they penetrated the country. It did not exist among the people who lived there previously²⁰⁷). The other tribe described by Verley are the *Ovibundu*. He thinks this tribe as well as several others used to mummify the bodies of their dead chiefs but that now they only treat the heads. This being due to the fact that when they were driven away from their former dwelling places, they were unable to take with them the whole bodies of their chiefs and had to limit themselves to the heads. And it had thus become a custom amongst them to mummify the heads of the dead, which were then kept in small sacred temples in the part of village set apart for the chief and called *elombe*. The heads could then be brought along in case the tribe again had to leave their settlements²⁰⁸). We also know, to be sure, that the Egyptians already made a practice of mummifying their rulers several thousand years ago. In *Notes de Folklore Lari*, Journal de la Société des Africanistes, there is an account indicating that the Lari tribe, in any case in bygone days, had a habit of delaying

the burial of a prominent person. Under the heading of "Mort des chefs ou notables" is found the following: "Le cadavre est conservé dans sa case et progressivement entouré des étoffes dont on dispose, on en ajoute une chaque fois que l'odeur devient insupportable"²⁰⁹). When coffins were used, they must of course have been enormous to hold the corpse which was wrapped in such a great amount of cloth²¹⁰). On 24 April, 1965, I received an interesting letter from Missionary Sven Hagerfors, written on 13 April, 1965, at Mansimou in the Congo Republic of Brazzaville. It was an answer to my letter of 23 March, 1965, in which I asked for certain data. Hagerfors, who had himself worked among the Bateke, to the north of Brazzaville, wrote about this tribe: "In accordance with ancient Bateke custom the dead were not to be buried immediately. Chiefs especially, their favorite wives and prominent men should be honoured by not being buried too quickly. One, two and up to three months such a corpse was kept. It was hung up underneath the roof of the hut, a fire was made under it and kept going night and day while mourning songs were sung. It is said that the wives of a chief, in particular, must carefully observe these rules when their husbands died. They must not leave the hut, and to give the impression of grief they had to be almost naked. Among the Bateke in the Zanaga region the custom is losing its hold over the people. It is only put into practice when it comes to rather prominent persons. As far as I know the sewing-up of the corpse was done in the manner shown in the picture (concerning the photograph see below). I was recently up on the Bateke plateau, the high table-land you know, that extends from Brazzaville towards the north. Here one meets the Bateke who are much more conservative than the people in Zanaga. No more than 100 kilometres from Brazzaville, this old custom can still be in practice. 100 kilometres from Brazza is thus a village, where the *chef de canton* lives. This one is quite old and bent with age. Now it is a question of our building a community centre for a *paroisse* up there. The site was already chosen when we arrived, but the work had not yet been started. And our people from here began to discuss the suitability of the site. It was pointed out to us that it was situated in the direction of the wind from the village. The old chief might soon die, it was said, and then his body would be smoke-dried for three months resulting in our getting the smell across our grounds. It was therefore suggested that we choose a more suitable site without giving the reason why. This was also done. The head of the district, Bazenga Aaron from Mansimou, who had made many journeys there for years, reported the following: A wife of the King of the Bateke had died. He proceeded according to custom. She was tied up in a sitting position, and was wrapped in dry banana leaves (such are also brought to the house of mourning by friends) and then cloth. The body was hung up in a hut, a fire made and the burial-wake started. But such a stench spread in the village that the monitors from other parts complained to the school authorities in Brazzaville and as a consequence a couple of policemen were sent to persuade the king to bury his wife. He got angry, forbade the people to sell food to the teachers, who

very nearly starved to death. By and by the woman was buried”²¹¹). In the archives of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden is a photograph from the Bateke burial mentioned above²¹²). This example of mummification among the Bateke north of the Babwende territory shows striking similarities to the drying process of niombo burials. Examples of mummifying the dead are no doubt many and various.

b) *Shrouding*

When it is question of shrouding the dead, the difference is instantly greater. We have already mentioned the way in which the Kimbundu tribe in Angola dressed the bodies of their chiefs in oxhides²¹³). We have also seen that the ruler of the old Kingdom of the Congo was wrapped in a large quantity of cloth²¹⁴). Möller, Pagels and Glerup report from the Kuilu territory that when the deceased chief's body had been mummified by drying, “he was swathed in cloth of native grass-fabric or European manufacture and then buried in a sitting position”²¹⁵). Also here the examples would be multiple but nowhere, it seems, can a case be shown where the shrouding of the corpse is done as when the niombo of the Babwende is prepared. In some cases coffins are used, in others not. The Balamba in Northern Rhodesia used bark canoes instead of coffins as we have already seen²¹⁶).

c) *People Buried Alive*

The custom of burying, for example, slaves alive in connection with a chief's burial is by no means peculiar to the Babwende. It is met with in several other places in Africa. It was found in the old Kingdom of the Congo²¹⁷). Baumann speaks of this custom in connection with the Nyoro and Ganda tribes in the territory round about the great lakes. He writes: “Autrefois, en Nyoro et en Ganda, on enterrait avec le roi quelques-unes de ses femmes et de ses serviteurs vivants après leur avoir brisé membres”²¹⁸). Also in the eastern Soudan it was customary for the wives to be buried alive together with their deceased husband, the chief²¹⁹). This custom has thus been encountered in large parts of Africa.

d) *Strange Grave-side Happenings*

Also here one can point to somewhat similar proceedings among other tribes as those existing among the Babwende, where the whole thing aims at proving their innocence of the departed one's death or trying to free themselves from the harmful influence of the spirits. W.F.P. Burton writes about the Luba tribe: “All present at the grave-side declare, ‘We are innocent of your death, and do not know its cause’. This, even though they may know quite well that he was killed by a leopard or a buffalo, for they say that whatever it was, there must have been some magic or some malignant spirit at the back of it, and they wish to disassociate

themselves from this.—After the burial, all go to the river to cleanse themselves, with the exception of one man who lights a small fire in the path. Those returning from the river step over the fire, believing that in this manner they shake off the spirit which may be following them”²²⁰).

e) *Shooting*

Möller, Pagels and Glerup report from the Lower Congo that the shooting when someone died is very common there. “In accordance with the social position of the deceased, a greater or lesser number of shots are fired in his honour; be it a king who has died, the shooting goes on, night and day for a time, but even for a small child shot after shot is fired for several hours”²²¹).

f) *Grave-Adornment*

As for the grave-adornment the description by Möller, Pagels and Glerup may also be quoted: “On the grave are put broken calabashes or pottery and poles with amulets hung on them are set all around in the ground”²²²). During my own many trips in the Lower Congo I often had the opportunity to see this peculiar grave-adornment in many places, consequently even outside the Babwende territory.

g) *Deceased Persons as Objects of Cult*

We have already seen that the spirits of the dead are objects of cult to the Babwende among others. This cult, the ancestor cult, is common in the Lower Congo, even outside the Babwende territory. There are many descriptions supporting this fact, to be sure. In the Neo-Soudanese culture sphere the royal remains were the object of worship²²³). Among certain tribes in the southern Congo the King was, according to the same author, everywhere considered a holy being, whom nobody was allowed to see while eating, and who lived in confinement and for whom certain arrangements were after his death²²⁴).

h) *Destruction of a Dead Chief's House*

Among the Babwende it was customary to burn the late chief's house after his burial—the house where the corpse-drying and the niombo-dressing had taken place²²⁵). Doke reports a similar practice among the Balamba in Northern Rhodesia. He writes: “The hut in which the chief's body had rotted is shut up (after the burial RW) and left to fall to pieces by itself”²²⁶).

Confronted by all the above-mentioned similarities, which the cult of the Babwende may appear to have in common with those of other tribes, one naturally assumes an inquiring attitude: Is there some connection perhaps, and if that is the case, how should it be explained? Or are the similarities only accidental? If a



Niombo still lying on the ground before the funeral procession

connection be assumed to exist between the burial rites of the different tribes and peoples, for example, what routes have in that case the influences followed? In his day, Professor Charles G. Seligman seemed convinced that the peoples of Equatorial Africa had been influenced by Egypt, among others. He says on one occasion: "Among the Wangata (a Bantu people that Murdock classifies as belonging to the Mongo group RW²²⁷) an important person of either sex is buried in a massive coffin with a lid carved to represent the deceased. It is difficult not to believe that here is an echo of the Egyptian mummy case. If this be so, may not the practice of a tribe near Lake Leopold II., who after a rough preparation of the body roll it in native cloth and place it in a canoe-shaped coffin, be regarded as connected with the funerary boats of Egyptian burial ceremony. Since the anthropoid coffin was unknown before the XI. dynasty, it follows that the northern influence must have been exerted after this period. Egypt's first great expansion (after the Pyramid builders) dates from the XII. dynasty, when Egyptian and Negro were in intimate contact at the second Cataract, as shown by the celebrated decree of Senusert III. Further, about this time special importance seems to have been attributed to the funerary voyage on the Nile, indeed almost all the models of funerary boats in our collections are of this period.

"If these facts be accepted as evidences of the date at which Egyptian ideas influenced Equatorial Africa, there are other customs which seem to indicate

that this was not the only period of such cultural drift. The coffins of the III. and IV. dynasties were often large rectangular boxes designed and painted to represent houses. Now the Mayumbe roll the body of a dead chief in layers of cloth and place it in an enormous wooden coffin of rectangular shape, the top of which is carved to present a homestead. Again, the funeral ceremonial of the Ndolo seems reminiscent of this period. Immediately after death the Ndolo prepare the body, painting it red, touching up the eyebrows with charcoal, and propping it up with open eyes and mouth on a high seat in the very posture of the ka statues of the Pyramid-builders, i.e. seated with the forearms and hands resting on things, a position which I venture to say no Negro would adopt. The body remains here for a day, while more or less continual drumming and dancing goes on, and is then buried.

"If I have not laid too much stress on the XII. dynasty *liaison*, it would seem that the culture drift originating the Ndolo custom was earlier than that affecting the Wangata and the Mayumbe. Professor Elliot Smith tells me that in Egypt bodies were not deliberately painted red before the XXI. dynasty, but it is possible that the Ndolo confused the dead body with the effigy and — for the time of its exposure — treated it as the Egyptians treated their wooden statues from an early date onwards. Nor must it be forgotten that to the present day the Bari (which Murdock classifies among the Bantoid people who inhabit the Nigerian Plateau RW²²⁸) paint themselves red"²²⁹).

In *Notes Analytiques sur les Collections Ethnographiques du Musée du Congo* the following is noted: "Du temps du roi Ramsès, quand un notable mourait les femmes déchiraient leurs vêtements et se mettaient à hurler et à se lamenter. Les assistants se couvraient la tête des cendres. Une coutume absolument semblable existe dans toute l'Afrique centrale. Les femmes congolaises déchirent ou ôtent leurs pagnes, se peignent le corps nu de couleurs variées, se mettent de la terre, des cendres, des plumes, des brindelles d'herbes, de l'argile colorée dans les cheveux et hurlent en se composant une figure de circonstance. Les assistants les imitent"²³⁰). Verley makes comparisons between the burial rites of Angola's people and those of the ancient Egyptians. He reports, as mentioned earlier, that the bodies of the chiefs according to ancient tradition must never be abandoned or exposed to profanation. He says: "Il fallait surtout que sa dépouille charnelle soit conservée, pieusement; c'est la même exigence dans les religions égyptiennes pour le corps de leurs Pharaons et de leurs personnages importants"²³¹). The English missionary pioneer, N. H. Bentley, gives a description from San Salvador, the capital of the old Congo kingdom, which well tallies with what we already have found among the Babwende and even other tribes of the Lower Congo. He tells us that it was the greatest wish of a Congolese once to be buried in as much cloth as possible with pomp and circumstance. When a friend died it was quite natural to give a present of cloth for his shroud, and often a large one. Thus a prominent man was often buried in hundreds of



Nzaba Mankele offering to cloth idol

yards of cloth²³²). — As shown earlier it is extremely difficult to determine what the Babwende have borrowed from the cult forms of other tribes and what are only similar forms, perhaps existing among several tribes independent of each other. In a letter to Manker, Karlman gives a description indicating that the niombo cult of the Babwende might have its counterpart even elsewhere. Karlman writes: “Ich habe den Besuch eines jungen Administators gehabt, der behauptete, ähnliche angekleidete Leichen in dem Distrikt gesehen zu haben, wo er früher stationiert war. Es war zwischen Leopoldville und der Mündung des Kasai flusses. Die Leichen wurden getrocknet und gekleidet gerade wie hier, nach seiner Behauptung. Dies ist die einzige Angabe, die ich von irgendeiner Seite erhalten habe. Dutzende von Administratoren und anderen Beamten von weit auseinanderliegenden Gegenden im Französischen und Belgischen Kongo haben meine Photographien von dem Niombo-Gebrauch gesehen, und alle haben versichert, dass sie nie von einem derartigen Gebrauch haben reden hören, wo sie gewesen waren.” Manker comments on this as follows: “Diese Angabe vom Oberen Kongo ist natürlich von allergrösstem Interesse, aber es ist mir noch nicht gelungen, sie bestätigt zu erhalten”²³³). There might, nevertheless, have

been some truth in the young administrator's information, although he was mistaken about the niombo shroud itself. In his letter of 28 March 1965, Missionary Eric Bylin corroborated the fact that there are people south of the Kasai river who dry as well as shroud their dead. It "is the Ba-Dzing or the Badinga. Their chiefs are dried over a slow fire and then shrouded in 'pagne' but whether they thereby assume increased dimensions I do not know"²³⁴). Murdock places the Ba-Dzing in the Kasai group of the Central Bantu²³⁵).

3. *So-Called Babembe Cloth Idols*

The cloth idols of the Babembe are a form of cult that in this connection perhaps calls for greater attention. The Babembe are a Bantu tribe living to the north of the Babwende and thus a neighbouring tribe of the Babwende. Sometimes evident similarities have appeared to exist between the cloth idols of the Babembe and the niombo of the Babwende indicating there being a connection between these two forms of cult. Laman writes the following about the cloth idols of the Babembe: "Among the Babembe and others the bones of the deceased are collected to be wrapped up in mats and cloth which are given the form of a man. Up at Kingoyi the corpses are wrapped up whole into huge colossuses in the shape of human beings and buried in that way. North of Kingoyi among the Babembe the bodies are first buried and when considered decayed, the bones are disinterred and wrapped up into small so-called 'festival corpses'. They are made in the shape of a sitting human being with outstretched arms like someone alive. They are 'tattooed' with chalk and adorned with pearls etc. Outside they are covered with red cloth. The red colour signifies the colour of life, the festival attire. In an ordinary dwelling there may be found both one and two such 'festival corpses'. By the fire-light at night it is quite gruesome to watch these figures. Those who live there together with them, pour out palm-wine before them and give them offerings while praying for bodily blessings"²³⁶). Manker takes up this description by Laman and points out the fact that "die Zeugidole der Babembe haben eine frappante Ähnlichkeit mit dem Niombo der Babwende. Material, Herstellungsweise und Stil sind gleich, ebenso die charakteristische Armstellung. Die Plastik ist demnach im grossen ganzen dieselbe: das Vorfahrenbild der Babembe ist eine Miniaturform vom Niombo der Babwende"²³⁷). At New-year, 1948, the writer visited the Babembe and had the opportunity to photograph a group of cloth idols or festival corpses at a village called Nsumbu, situated in the vicinity of the Kolo mission-station in the former French Congo. The name of the man keeping these cloth idols in his house was Nzaba Mankele. He usually kept these idols in the house, where there was a hole in the earth floor in front of them where palm-wine among other things was offered to them. At our wish he put them out in the village square in front of his house so that we could photograph them. One of the three represented a woman, the second a man, and the third and smallest one, a child presumably.

The woman and the man both wore sun-helmets while the smallest one wore two felt hats. The two larger idols held their arms as described by Laman while the third one had its forearms and hands resting against its legs. All three were in a sitting position. The figure representing a man carried two bags or satchels on one of its arms. They all had outer garments consisting of red blankets²³⁸). Missionary Gustaf Jakobsson, who for many years had worked among the Babembe and also was present on the occasion mentioned, confirmed, once more, during a conversation with me on 24 April, 1965, that these ancestor idols contain the bones of deceased ancestors. He also said that he had found similar ancestor idols among the Bateke, who live in the territory adjacent to the Babembe. He particularly mentioned the Ntsiaki village, where he had seen such idols²³⁹). Manker quotes Öhrneman and says about the cloth idols: "Oftmals waren sie mit den charakteristischen Tätowierungen des Klans geschmückt, angebracht auf dem rotem Zeug mit Kreide und schwarzer Farbe"²⁴⁰). Manker also makes the following commentary: "Die Ähnlichkeit zwischen dem Niombo der Babwende und den Vorfahrenbildern von Zeug der Babembe ist so gross, dass ein Zusammenhang angenommen werden muss. Aber merkwürdigerweise ist der Niombo-Gebrauch unter den Babembe unbekannt (Nach Angaben von dem Missionar H. Lindgren, der viele Jahre hindurch unter den Babembe gewirkt hat), und Zeugidole von derselben Art wie die der Babembe sind nach Karlman (Brief vom 8. Juli 1931) den Babwende in der Kingoyi-Gegend vollständig fremd. Dieser Sachverhalt beweist jedoch nicht, dass nicht eine frühere Ideenübertragung zwischen den beiden Stämmen stattgefunden hat. Der Form nach herrscht ein gewisser Unterschied zwischen dem Niombo der Babwende und dem Zeugidol der Babembe: der erstere steht aufrecht, der letztere sitzt. Bei näherer Nachforschung hat sich indessen herausgestellt, dass die Babwende nördlich von Kingoyi, also den Babembe zunächst, früher dem Niombo dieselbe sitzende Stellung zu geben pflegten, die das Idol der Babembe kennzeichnet (Karlman, oben angeführter Brief)"²⁴¹).

The question one inevitably asks when confronted by the comparisons rendered above, is this: Did the Babembe get the idea for their cloth idol from the niombo of the Babwende or is it the very opposite of that? Manker answers this question thus: "Die erstere Alternative scheint mir am wahrscheinlichsten und stimmt auch mit der Annahme, dass der Niombo aus dem oben beschriebenen allgemeinen Leicheneinkleidungsgebrauch im Unteren Kongo entstanden ist, überein"²⁴²). Earlier we have already seen that Laman, Baumann and Murdock, among others, include the Babembe in the Congo group of Bantu people. There are, however, others who have a dissentient opinion on this score. Jakobsson had several conversations with Professor Malcolm Guthrie, one of the foremost authorities on the Bantu tongues in recent times, during his visit at Kolo. Guthrie had then maintained that Laman and others were wrong when assigning Kibembe (i.e. the dialect spoken by the Babembe) a place among

other Congo dialects. He held that the Babembe come from the eastern part of Africa, from the Tanganyika region, and that Kibembe on points that count resembles the dialects spoken there ²⁴³). This could therefore mean that the cloth idols of the Babembe might be a heritage from their earlier place of abode. Regarding the Ovibundu in Angola we have seen how their ancestor cult by the force of circumstances underwent important changes. Remarkable is also the fact that Manker believes he has found clan tattoos on the calabash figures he has described that resemble the clan tattoos of the Babembe more than they do the usual tattoos of the Babwende²⁴⁴).

The niombo cult is, beyond all doubt, fascinating and unique in its kind. It may also well have served as a model to the burial rites of other tribes. It has, as we have seen, a lot of traits that can be found among the cult forms of many other tribes in Africa.

ADDENDUM

Since this paper was written, a particularly interesting document concerning niombo burials and worth quoting has come to my attention. It consists of notes made by Dr. Oscar Stenström, who for a number of years was a teacher at Kingoyi Training-College and later on principal of Kimpese Training-College. The document is interesting because it gives a description of corpse-drying which deviates from that of other sources.

Stenström writes: "When someone had died, a pit was dug in the deceased's house. A post was then driven into the bottom of the pit and poles were laid across it. The corpse was tied to the post. Fires were thereafter lighted all around and the body fluids allowed to drip down into the pit. When the corpse was dry, perhaps after a month, it was wrapped in cloth next to the skin, then straw-mats, dry banana leaves and finally red blankets on the top. The corpse-swather shaped an abominable man with one arm reaching up and the other outwards. The corpse-fellow could then be kept another month or two in the village."

Stenström also gives examples of songs sung in connection with the burials when food was brought out for the mourners and when the funeral procession set out for the burial-place. The following may be cited: "The interment took place at noon. The niombo was now put on a bier. The wooden trumpets blared and the drums boomed. The family cried and wailed. When the niombo was picked up from the ground they said: 'Niombo muziki katonda' (the niombo likes those carrying him to the grave). Songs of grief were also sung: 'Ah, utusisidi ayaya. Ah, wenzi kwandi, ah yaya, ah yaya.' If some of the bearers stumbled and could not carry any farther, it was said that the niombo did not want to go to Mpemba — the realm of the dead (Niombo weti nwana — the niombo struggles). Then the family must be sent on ahead on the trail to cry and wail and thus induce the niombo to follow.

"On the fourth day all the relatives went into the house where the corpse had been dried. They poured wine and water into the pit wherein the body fluids had dripped, a dough was mixed and smeared on the forehead and arms of all the relatives to protect them against illness. This was the deceased's last blessing."

NOTES

- 1) HAMMAR 1907, 143
- 2) MURDOCK 1959, 292:3
- 3) CUVILIER 1946, 11
- 4) DE MUNCK 1956, 15
- 5) BAUMANN 1962, 174
- 6) MÖLLER, PAGELS, GLEERUP
1887, 263
- 7) HAMMAR 1907, 154
- 8) *idem*, 144
- 9) *idem*, 144
- 10) LAMAN 1912, XI, XII
- 11) MANKER 1925, 173
- 12) *idem*, 173
- 13) *idem*, 173
- 14) MANKER 1932, 167, 1)
- 15) ÖHRNEMAN 1929, 5
- 16) LAMAN 1936, 817
- 17) LAMAN 1912, 198
- 18) LAMAN 1931, 177
- 19) BÖRRISSON 1925, 5
- 20) KIKONGO-SVENSK ORDBOK
n. d., 95
- 21) LAMAN 1936, 683
- 22) MANKER 1929, 148
- 23) BIRKET-SMITH 1943, 414
- 24) HAMMAR 1907, 147—148
- 25) MANKER 1929, 148
- 26) LAMAN, MS. n.d., 38
- 27) NOTES ANALYTIQUES 1906, 174
- 28) HAMMAR 1905, 4—6
- 29) MANKER 1929, 151
- 30) LAMAN 1957, 89
- 31) NOTES ANALYTIQUES 1906, 175
- 32) LAMAN 1957, 86
- 33) *idem*, 87
- 34) WALDER 1903, 229—230
- 35) HAMMAR 1905, 4—6
- 36) MANKER 1929, 151
- 37) MANKER 1932, 159
- 38) WALDER 1903, 230
- 39) WALDER 1918, 58
- 40) MANKER 1929, 151
- 41) MANKER 1925, 177
- 42) LAMAN 1957, 88
- 43) LAMAN 1905, 308
- 44) MANKER 1932, 166
- 45) PETTERSSON 1923, Vol. 2, 29—30
- 46) LUNDAHL 1922, 85—86
- 47) HAMMAR 1905, 4—6
- 48) ÖHRNEMAN 1929, 56
- 49) MÖLLER, PAGELS, GLEERUP
1887, 289—290
- 50) *idem*, 290
- 51) LAMAN 1957, 96
- 52) LAMAN 1953, 71
- 53) PETTERSSON 1923, 30
- 54) MANKER 1925, 178
- 55) PETTERSSON 1923, 30
- 56) HAMMAR 1907, 149
- 57) MANKER 1932, 159
- 58) LAMAN 1957, 88
- 59) HAMMAR 1907, 148—149
- 60) LAMAN 1957, 88
- 61) LAMAN, MS. n.d., 61
- 62) LAMAN 1957, 96
- 63) *idem*, 89
- 64) HAMMAR 1907, 148—149
- 65) WALDER 1903, 230
- 66) MÖLLER, PAGELS, GLEERUP
1887, 289
- 67) MANKER 1929, 151—152
- 68) HAMMAR 1907, 149
- 69) LAMAN, MS. n.d., 57; *idem* 1957, 89
- 70) MANKER 1925, 175
- 71) LAMAN 1957, 90
- 72) HAMMAR 1907, 149
- 73) LAMAN, MS. n.d., 57
- 74) ÖHRNEMAN 1929, 56
- 75) LAMAN 1957, 90
- 76) ÖHRNEMAN 1929, 58
- 77) MANKER 1932, 167
- 78) LAMAN, MS. n.d., 57

- 79) MANKER 1929, 152
- 80) MÜLLER, PAGELS, GLEERUP 1887, 290
- 81) LAMAN 1936, 243
- 82) MANKER 1929, 152
- 83) LAMAN 1957, 90
- 84) MANKER 1929, 152
- 85) HAMMAR 1907, 149
- 86) MANKER 1929, 152
- 87) MANKER 1932, 163
- 88) LAMAN, MS. n.d., 57
- 89) ÖHRNEMAN 1929, 58
- 90) WALDER 1903, 230
- 91) WALDER 1918, 153—154
- 92) *idem*, 150
- 93) ALDEN 1965
- 94) BÖRRISSON 1925, 5
- 95) LAMAN 1905, 297—309
- 96) LAMAN 1957, 90
- 97) LUNDAHL 1922, 85—86
- 98) MANKER 1932, 166
- 99) ALDEN 1923—1929, 65
- 100) ALDEN 1965
- 101) LAMAN 1957, 90
- 102) *idem*, 90
- 103) HAMMAR 1907, 160
- 104) LAMAN 1917, 292
- 105) ARCHIVES OF MISSION COVE-
NANT CHURCH OF SWEDEN,
Kongo A 1280
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